# STUDY OF VARIATION AND CHANGE IN A BILINGUAL CONTEXT: THE CASE OF BISHNUPRIYA

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DELHI IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**IN**

**LINGUISTICS**

**By**

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# CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Study of Variation and Change in a Bilingual Context: The Case of Bishnupriya" is an original work by Nazrin B. Laskar prepared under the supervision of Dr Shobha Satyanath and has not been submitted in part or full for any degree or diploma to this or any other university. All the sources have been fully acknowledged.


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# DECLARATION

I, Nazrin B. Laskar, hereby declare that all the matter embodied in this thesis entitled: "Study of Variation and Change in a Bilingual Context: The Case of Bishnupriya" is the result of investigations carried out by me at the Department of Linguistics, University of Delhi, New Delhi-110007, INDIA under the supervision of Dr Shobha Satyanath and that it has not been submitted in part or in full to any other University/Institute, here or elsewhere for the award of any degree or diploma.

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(Research Scholar)

**Acknowledgements**

This dissertation owes a lot to many people and institutions. I would like to begin by thanking my supervisor Dr Shobha Satyanath for introducing me to the area of Variation and Change. I am extremely grateful to her for her guidance and assistance throughout the preparation of this dissertation. Her critical and insightful comments at every stage helped me in giving a shape to this dissertation. Without her support and encouragement this dissertation would not have been possible. In fact, it was her Sociolinguistic classes in my MA Program which drew me towards this discipline. She inspired and motivated me to take up research in the area of Sociolinguistics. I owe a lot to her.

I acknowledge my gratitude to Central Institute of Indian Languages for granting me Ph.D. Scholarship before the beginning of my research. This award supported me in the initial years of my research.

I am indebted to my teachers Prof R. C. Sharma, Prof Ramakant Agnihotri, Prof Ravinder Gargesh, Prof Tista Bagchi, Dr Tanmoy Bhattacharya and Dr Pradeep Kumar Das. I have immensely benefitted and learnt so much from all of them.

I express my gratitude to the Bishnupriya and Bengali community in Hailakandi (Assam) on whose speech this study is based. I cannot forget the co-operation and hospitality that was offered to me by members of these two communities during my field work and subsequent visits to their village. Nishi Sinha, Anu Sinha, Navendu and Parimal *da* deserve special mention for providing me the crucial contacts in the Bishnupriya community.

I express my sincere thanks to Dr. T. S. Satyanath, my local guardian in Delhi. His presence and help that was always forthcoming compensated for the absence of my family in Delhi. I have been enriched by his stimulating discussions on various issues especially in the field of culture and literature. The time, especially the Diwalis that I have spent in their house will always be cherished.

I acknowledge here with thanks the help that was offered to me by the non-teaching staff of the Department of Linguistics. Ms Pushpa, Mr Soni and Mr Vishal have been extremely helpful. I am very grateful to all the three. I take this opportunity to thank the librarians of Linguistics Department Library, Central Reference Library (DU), Ratan Tata Library, JNU Library, CIIL Library and the National Archive for lending their help and always facilitating my search for materials whenever I needed it.

Friends: Sara, Asen, Kakoli, Gibu, Neha and Praveen, Avijit, Levin, Navanita and Dinesh, Nazim, Uzma and Om, Geetika and Ravindra have been always there for me. I don't know how to thank them.

No words are adequate to express how I feel for my parents for their undemanding encouragement and support in every step of my life. They are my pillars of strength. The support of my brother and sister and their families have always made my work easier. My mother-in-law and father-in-law have been very considerate, patient and supportive. I cannot thank them enough.

Special thanks are due to my husband Mustafa for his incredible patience, encouragement and assistance.

Finally, I thank Almighty for his blessings.

*Nazrin B. Laskar*

**Abstract**

This dissertation is a study of Bishnupriya speech community from the standpoint of bilingualism. Through the analysis of the tense, aspect and mood categories, this study addresses issues relating to the representation of grammar (s) of the different languages in the bilinguals in a bilingual community. This dissertation is organized in five chapters.

The first chapter deals with the theoretical and methodological framework adopted in this study.

The second chapter develops the grammar and semantics of the tense (T), aspect (A) and mood (M) categories, and forms that express these categories in Bishnupriya (BP) and Hailakandi Bengali (HB). The analysis in this chapter shows that BP has one tense (past tense), one aspect (imperfective) and one mood (irrealis) category. The TAM categories are variably marked. BP is close to HB with respect to tense and mood marking. However, BP diverges from HB in the expression of aspect categories.

The third chapter presents a quantitative analysis of the variable expression of the TAM categories in BP. The linguistic constraints conditioning the TAM forms in BP are discussed along with HB, in order to assess the relationship between the two languages. Quantitative analysis reveals that variability in the TAM marking in BP is conditioned primarily by the different patterns of language use of the bilingual Bishnupriyas. The different patterns of language use include Bishnupriya speech (L1), Bengali speech (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched speech (C-S). In addition, quantitative analysis also indicates that though BP shares many of the TAM forms with HB, the linguistic constraints operating on these forms are not identical in these two languages. Nonetheless, there are a few constraints which BP shares with HB.

The fourth chapter provides cross-tabulation of the TAM forms in BP by patterns of language use and other linguistic and social constraints to explore the relationship of patterns of language use with other constraints. Cross-tabulation results indicate that the TAM forms attempt to sketch a distinction between BP and HB. The linguistic patterning of L1 is different from the L2 and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched speech of the Bishnupriyas. The L2 and code-switched speech reflect a shift towards the HB pattern. Yet, some differences exist between the L2 and code-switched discourses of the Bishnupriyas. The L2 data demonstrate a partial shift towards HB and also follows some of the constraints that operate in BP. In contrast, the code-switches show a complete merge with the HB pattern. The analysis is this chapter suggests that BP and HB operate largely as two independent grammars and yet there is interaction between the two.

The fifth chapter summarizes the analysis and findings presented in the dissertation.

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## Abbreviations

**Symbols**

| | |
|---|---|
| Ø | Zero/Unmarked |
| ~ | Alternation |
| I | First person pronoun |
| II | Second person pronoun |
| III | Third person pronoun |

**Abbreviations**

| | |
|---|---|
| A | Aspect |
| Abl | Ablative case |
| Acc | Accusative case |
| Caus | Causative |
| Cl | Classifier |
| COL | College |
| Cop | Copula |
| Cor | Correlative Pronoun |
| Dat | Dative |
| Det | Determiner |
| DM | Discourse marker |
| Emph | Emphatic |
| f | Female |
| Fem | Feminine |
| Fut | Future tense |
| Gen | Genitive case |
| GRAD | Graduate |
| Hab | Habitual |
| Hon | Honirific |
| Hor | Hortative |
| HS | High School |

| | |
|---|---|
| Imp | Imperative |
| Inf | Infinitive |
| Inst | Instrumental case |
| Interr | Interrogative |
| Irr | Irrealis |
| LC | Lower Class |
| Loc | Locative case |
| LP | Lower Primary |
| M | Mood |
| m | Male |
| Masc | Masculine |
| MC | Middle Class |
| MS | Middle School |
| N | Number |
| Neg | Negative |
| Nom | Nominative case |
| Non-Fut | Non-Future Tense |
| Pcpl | Participle |
| Perf | Perfect |
| Pl | Plural |
| PG | Post-Graduate |
| Pres Prog | Present Progressive |
| Prog | Progressive |
| Pst | Past |
| Pst Hab | Past Habitual |
| Pst Prog | Past Progressive |
| Quot | Quotative |
| Sg | Singular |
| T | Tense |
| UMC | Upper Middle Class |
| V | Verb |

# Chapter - I

# Introduction and Methodology

## 1.0 Introduction

This dissertation is a study of the Bishnupriya speech community from a bilingual perspective. The main focus of this dissertation is to study variation in the use of tense, aspect and mood categories in Bishnupriya, emerging as a result of bilingualism. Bishnupriya is a contact language, whose genesis took place as a result of interactions between varieties of Eastern Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman in Manipur (See Laskar 2003a, Satyanath and Laskar 2008a). This study focuses on the Bishnupriya speech community located in the Hailakandi district of Assam. In Hailakandi, the Bishnupriyas co-exist with the Bengalis. Bengali, apart from being one of the primary languages that contributed to the formation of Bishnupriya, is the dominant language and the official language of the district. Therefore, the Bishnupriyas living in Hailakandi are naturally bilingual having facility in both Bishnupriya and Bengali. Bengali is very much a part of their environment and verbal repertoire. Through the investigation of tense, aspect and mood categories, this study explores the linguistic behaviour of Bishnupriya speech community in a bilingual context within which it exists. The study addresses larger questions as to what happens to the grammar of a bilingual in a bilingual speech community. The findings of the study have implications for issues such as the linguistic competence of the bilinguals in the case of the Bishnupriyas constitutes one unified grammar for the different codes or two separate grammars or an interactive grammar as demonstrated in the tense, aspect and mood system.

## 1.1 Studies on Bilingualism

The phenomenon of bilingualism has generated a lot of interest among sociolinguists, psycholinguists and theoretical linguists, and has been dealt with from different

perspectives. Discussion on bilingualism can be traced back to the works of structuralists, such as Bloomfield (1933), Fries and Pike (1949).

Weinreich (1968:1) describes bilingualism as "the practice of alternately using two languages" and the person engaged in such an activity as 'bilingual'. He uses the notion of 'interference' to characterize the speech of bilinguals. As a result of the knowledge of two languages, often a deviation from the norm of either language is observed, which is attributed to interference (cf. Weinrich 1968). The notions of interference and integration are ubiquitous in the earlier literature on bilingualism (Mackey 1962, Weinreich 1968, Moravcsik 1978). The locus of earlier studies was on the definition of bilingualism, types of bilingualism and measurement of the degree of bilingualism (Weinreich 1968, Mackey 1962, 1965, Haugen 1969, Kelly1969).

Subsequently, the focus of research on bilingualism shifted to the consequences of bilingualism as instantiated in borrowing, code-switching and their level of integration in the bilingual community (Haugen 1969, Poplack and Sankoff 1984, Mougeon et al. 1985 and others). These works emphasize on distinguishing borrowing (loan-words and nonce) from code-switching.[1] There are contrasting opinions regarding the level of phonological integration of loan words in a bilingual community. Some studies (Haugen 1950, 1969, Mougeon et al. 1985) assert that the variability in the phonological integration of loanwords depends on the speaker's degree of bilingualism, and that loan words are disintegrated as the individual and the speech community become more bilingual.[2] These studies also assert that the most highly bilingual speakers are the initiators of borrowing process and innovators of phonological change. In contrast, other researches carried out in the quantitative sociolinguistic framework propose that the pattern of integration conforms to the norms of the bilingual speech community (See Poplack et al. 1988). The findings of these studies (Poplack and associates) suggest that along with the norms of the bilingual speech community, there are other factors such as frequency of use, attestation time of the loan word and various social factors which play a role in the phonological integration of the loan words.

Poplack (1988) shows a difference in the behaviour of bilinguals in the use of nonce words and loan words. In her Ottawa-Hull study of French-English bilingualism, she demonstrated that speakers with high proficiency in English show a preference for nonce borrowing, whereas less bilingual speakers favour the widespread loan words. Their greater proficiency in English allows them to resort to nonce borrowing to perform discourse functions. Sankoff (2002) in a review of the findings from many recent studies of bilingualism demonstrated that phonological adaptation is bidirectional. There are many studies which illustrated the assimilation of the borrowed words to the phonology of the recipient languages but there are also many studies which documented the phonological influence of the borrowed language in the receiving language (cf. Paradis 1995, Sankoff 2002, Bond et al. 2006).

The phenomenon of code-switching occupies a significant place in the discourse on bilingualism. There is significant research in the variationist framework on code-switching in bilingual speech communities (See Poplack 1985, 1988, Poplack et al. 1988). This is a departure from the traditional studies on code-switching, which assumed code-switching as a deviant linguistic behaviour. The results of corpus based sociolinguistic studies carried out in the Puerto Rican (Spanish-English) bilingual speech community and the French-English bilingual speech community in Ottawa-Hull region in Canada demonstrated the role of speech communities in moulding the bilingual behaviour of the speakers. The findings of the research in these bilingual communities are discussed here. Poplack (1980) recognizes three types of code-switching that are common in the bilingual communities studied by her: inter-sentential, tag and intra-sentential code-switching. Amongst these three, the intra-sentential code-switches require the greatest degree of bilingual ability (See Poplack 1980).[3] However, her own study revealed that code-switches, which require more developed linguistic skill were produced by both balanced and non-balanced speakers. Despite the fact that the Ottawa-Hull bilingual situation resembles the Puerto Rican situation with respect to the manner of interaction, there are subtle differences in the bilingual behaviour especially with respect to code-switching patterns (See Poplack 1985). The 'true' code-switching that was restricted to skilled bilinguals in in-group communications in the Puerto Rican

community is rarely evident in the Ottawa-Hull French study. The differences in functions of code-switching in the two bilingual communities are described by Poplack (1985: 377) in the following words:

> "where the Puerto Ricans code-switched in a way which minimized the salience of the switch points, and where the switches formed part of an overall discourse strategy to use both languages, rather than to achieve any specific local discursive effects, the Ottawa-Hull speakers do the contrary. They draw attention to their code-switches by repetition, hesitation, intonational highlighting, explicit metalinguistic commentary etc., and use the contrast between the codes to underline the rhetorical appropriateness of their speech."

For the Puerto Ricans, code-switching is symbolic of their dual identity, and skilled switching is considered an asset for the highly fluent bilinguals. In contrast, in the French-English community, the switches are done generally to draw attention. These studies also revealed that there are differences in the attitude towards the phenomenon of code-switching in majority Francophone (Hull) and minority Francophone communities as in Ottawa. Code-switching to English from French is treated favourably in the French minority Ottawa region, but in the French majority Quebec, English is not appreciated and switches to English are limited to metalinguistic commentaries (Poplack 1988: 100). The speakers in the French minority Ottawa differ from the speakers in French majority Hull with regard to the attitude towards English. Although all the speakers acquiesce in assigning instrumental value to English and affective value to French, the Ottawa speakers extend the affective value to being bilingual as well. On the other hand, the majority French speakers in Hull consider their bilingualism as an instrumental necessity. Code-switching is considered as a natural attribute of bilinguals in Ottawa, but the majority Francophone speakers have a negative attitude towards code-switching and ascribe the presence of this phenomenon to the presence of the English in the environment (Poplack 1988). The verbal repertoire of the bilingual community is an overall reflection of the norms of the speech community.

Ethnographic studies view code-switching as a discourse phenomenon navigating various semantic and pragmatic functions (See Blom and Gumperz 1972, Gumperz

1982). Gumperz (1982) suggests that the motivation for code alternation is "stylistic and metaphorical rather than grammatical." These studies assume that bilinguals have knowledge of the usage norms of the listener as well, and do not indulge in code-switching styles before they are aware of the listener's background and attitude. The different codes used in code-switches represent separate activities. For instance, 'we code' is associated with in-group and informal activities, whereas 'they code' is associated with out-group relations. The discourse functions of code-switching have been acknowledged by Poplack and associates as well.

Muysken (2000) identifies three kinds of code-switches in the speeches of bilinguals: insertion, alternation and congruent lexicalization. There is significant literature available on the syntactic properties of code-switching and the constraints on code-switching (See Pfaff 1979 Woolford 1983, Joshi 1985, Clyne 1987 and others). There are studies which assume that there is structural asymmetry between the languages in the code-switches and the languages involved do not participate equally (Myers-Scotton and Jake 1995, Myers-Scotton 1997). In the code-switches, there is the Matrix Language which provides the main grammatical frame and then there is the Embedded Language which supplies the content elements (See Myers-Scotton 2006). Current studies assert that code-switching also leads to formation of mixed languages (Mc Convell 2008).

The linguistic phenomenon of convergence is another manifestation of bilingualism (Kouwenberg 2001). Convergence leads to structural similarity or inter-translatability between the structures of languages that are in contact with each other. Gumperz and Wilson (1971) in their classical study of Kupwar in India have shown convergence leading to complete inter-translatability involving the varieties spoken in Kupwar village, that is Urdu, Marathi (both are Indo-Aryan) and Kannada (Dravidan). The common features, which the Kupwar varieties share are found neither in the other varieties of these languages nor in the home varieties. Even though, it is traditionally claimed that lexical items are most easily borrowed, in Kupwar the lexical distinctness is maintained despite the structural convergence. Bilingualism has been a long standing

phenomenon in Kupwar and code-switching in the day-to-day interaction is very common. However, there is strict demarcation of public and home life. Hock (1986) asserts that for convergence to occur all the speakers of the languages involved must be bilingual. But there are other studies which suggest that extensive bilingualism is not a requirement for convergence to take place (Foley 1986). The phenomenon of diffusion of structural features across linguistic boundaries commonly known as areal linguistics received considerable attention in the researches on bilingualism (Emeneau 1956, Masica 1976, Campbell et al. 1986).

Fishman (1965, 1967) recognizes the role of domains for the choice of language in a bilingual community. These studies assume that in bilingual communities there can be compartmentalization of language with each assigned clearly demarcated functions.

Bilingualism is characterized by borrowing, code-switching, convergence etc. An extreme outcome of bilingualism can be language shift as well (Gal 1979, Myer-Scotton 2006, Bíró and Sipõcz 2009). The literature on language shift indicates characteristics, such as, structural simplification, domain restriction and reduction in style in the declining languages in cases of language change (Lavendera 1978, Makihara 2005). In circumstances of language change, linguistic innovation can also lead to the creation of new varieties (Hill 1989, Makihara 2005). It has been observed that children make a choice between linguistic varieties and adopt new styles which infact index social and identity differences (Makihara 2005). Thomason (2003) maintains that language change is the consequences of language contact. She mentions that a few mechanisms such as code-switching, code-alternation, passive familiarity, negotiation are involved in contact-induced change. Thomason (2003) also asserts that language change occurs because of the deliberate attempt of the speakers.

An extreme and far-reaching effect of bilingualism is the genesis of new languages popularly known as pidgin and creole etc. The processes involved in the genesis of these new languages are known as pidginization and creolization. The hypothesis pertaining to the origin of pidgins and creoles provoked lot of debate and

controversies (See Muhlhausler 1974, 1980, Bickerton 1984, Sankoff 1980, 1991, Holm 1988, Satyanath 1991). Another phenomenon which has received significant importance is the issue of dialect contact. Dialect contact may give rise to dialect mixture and thus lead to new dialect formation or koine formation through the process of koineization (Seigel 1985, Trudgill 1986, Kerswill 2002). Seigel (2001: 175) defines a koine in the following words:

> "A koine is a stabilized contact variety which results from the mixing and subsequent leveling of features of varieties which are similar enough to be mutually intelligible, such as regional or social dialects. This occurs in the context of increased interaction or integration among speakers of these varieties."

Various linguistic processes such as dialect mixture, leveling, simplification and reallocation are involved in koineization (Trudgill 1986, Kerswill 2002). Trudgill (1998, cited in Kerswill 2002) identifies three stages of new dialect formation which roughly relate to the first three generation of speakers:

| *Stage* | *Speakers involved* | *Linguistics characteristics* |
|---|---|---|
| I | adult migrants | rudimentary leveling |
| II | first native born speakers | extreme variability and further leveling |
| III | subsequent generations | focusing, leveling, and reallocation |

Kerswill and Williams (2000: 84) postulated eight principles which relate the process of koineization to its outcomes:

(1) Majority forms found in the mix, rather than minority forms, win out.
(2) Marked regional forms are disfavoured.
(3) Phonologically and lexically simple features are more often adopted than complex ones.
(4) Adults, adolescents and children influence the outcome of dialect contact differently.
(5) The adoption of features by a speaker depends on his or her network characteristics.

(6) There is no normal historical continuity with the locality either socially or linguistically. Most first and second generations are oriented towards language varieties that originate elsewhere.
(7) From initial diffusion, focusing takes place over one or two generations.
(8) Because of sociolinguistic maturation, the structure of the new speech community is first discernable in the speech of native-born adolescent group.

Studies on koineization have also acknowledged the role of children in the formation of koine (Trudgill 1986, Kerswill and Williams 2000). The main cause of dialect mixture in dialect contact has been attributed to accommodation when there is face to face interaction (cf. Trudgill 1986, Kerswill 2002). But others (Schneider 2003, Tuten 2003) propose that mixture takes place to forge identity formation. Trudgill (1986, 2008) rejects the role of identity in colonial new-dialect formation by pointing out that many varieties have emerged before the colonial period when the notion of identity may not have played any crucial role.

### 1.1.1 Studies on Child Bilingualism

The psycholinguistic focus has been primarily on early bilingual acquisition of languages. The study by Ronjat (1913) is considered the seminal empirical work on bilingual acquisition of languages. It was the first empirical study to propose generalizations regarding a bilingual child's two languages. The focus of bilingual acquisition studies is on the relationship between bilingual children's two languages. There is extensive literature available on whether children begin with one language or two language systems. The earlier studies such as Leopold (1970), Volterra and Taeschner (1978) posit that the initial processing of two languages in the children begin as one unitary system. In contrast, there are other studies on early bilingual acquisition which argue that there is separate development of the two languages. The bilingual children are able to differentiate their languages from the beginning, and they are able to use their different languages in appropriate contexts (De Houwer 1990, 2005, Deuchar and Quay 2000). De Houwer (2005) argues that the proponents of unitary development hypothesis interpret

the use of lexically mixed utterances as evidence for a unitary system. Many studies suggest that it is more essential to consider the sociolinguistic context where such utterances occur and the nature of language socialization (Lanza 1997a, b, Deuchar and Quay 2000, De Houwer 2005). The main thrust of the current researches is on the presence of cross-linguistic structures in the speech of bilingual children (Dopke 2000a, b). The presence of cross-linguistic structures indicates that there is cognitive interaction between the two languages which provide support for the separate development hypothesis. These studies claim that children are aware of the fact that they are dealing with two languages (cf. Dopke 2000a, Paradis 2000). Dopke (2000a) says that untypical structures found in bilingual data are evident in the speech of monolingual children as well, though the frequency is more in bilingual children, and also argue that the cross-linguistic influences are bilateral. She invokes the Competition Model which assumes that there is tension between similarities and differences of structural cues from both the languages.[4] The features which contrast between the languages actually help the child to keep the development of the languages separate, whereas the features that are similar between the languages create ambiguity for the child and hence trigger greater interaction. van der Linden (2000) argues that cognitive interaction occurs in both adults and children, and both languages remain accessible to children as well as adults. However, children have to first learn that they are dealing with two languages and that their speech has to conform to their respective systems which is not the case with adults.

The debate on critical period hypothesis (CPH) which assumes that language learning declines after a particular age occupies an important place in the literature on bilingualism (cf. Lenneberg 1967). There are many studies which claim that there is negative correlation between age of acquisition and second language proficiency (Oyama 1976, Dekeyser 2000). These studies claim that there is decline in language learning after a particular age. They also assert that adults may be faster than children in the beginning of their learning of the second language but their ultimate attainment generally do not match native speaker's standards. But there are some studies which contest the critical period hypothesis and provide counterevidence against it (Birdsong 1992, 2005, Bialystock 1997 and others). Some of these studies acknowledge factors like input,

interaction and social-psychological factors in language acquisition. Researches which adhere to the CPH refute the causes proposed against the CPH and suggest that children's learning is different from adults as children learn implicitly whereas adults learn explicitly. There are many sociolinguistic studies on immigrants which showed only partial acquisition of the phonology of the majority language by those who arrived as adults (Lee 2000, Adamson and Regan 1991, cited in Sankoff 2002). Labov (2007) suggests that even adults can change their linguistic system to a significant level even after the critical period. He, however, citing the example from Montreal French where a shift from apical to uvular /r/ was observed even among the adults, maintains no adults demonstrated complete shift to uvular [r], which many of the pre-adolescent displayed. Payne (1980) in a sociolinguistic study of middle class suburb of Philadelphia examined whether a child restructures her grammar upto the age of fourteen, and whether a child acquires the pattern of her peer group or retains the system of her parents. This study showed that the nativity of the parents play an important role in acquisition of the linguistic constraints with reference to short [a]. The findings of this study suggest that parental input plays the most important role in the learning of more complex patterns. Kerswill and Williams (2000) assert that immigrant children's language will reflect features of their parent's language that originated elsewhere.

### 1.2 Studies on Bishnupriya

The earliest work on Bishnupriya is a brief description of Bishnupriya found in Grierson (1903). Following Grierson, the works by Sinha (1968, 1981, 1986), which comprises of a Ph.D. thesis (1968) that was later published as a grammar of Bishnupriya (1981) and an etymological dictionary of Bishnupriya (1986) constitute valuable works on Bishnupriya. His grammar provides a description of the phonology, morphology and syntax of Bishnupriya, and traces their derivation. Although Sinha acknowledges the presence of both Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman features in Bishnupriya, he describes Bishnupriya as an Indo-Aryan language (Laskar 2003a).

Much of the research on Bishnupriya emerged in this decade, such as, Dey (1999), Laskar (1996, 2002a, b, 2003a, b, 2006, 2008a, b, c), Satyanath and Laskar (2002, 2003, 2006, 2008a, b, 2009). Laskar (1996) is a study of the gender system in Bishnupriya and Dey (1999) is a brief description of some of the select features of Bishnupriya grammar. The other works (Laskar 2002a, b, 2003a) discuss Bishnupriya as a contact language by providing a comparative analysis of phonology, lexicon and morpho-syntax of Bishnupriya, Assamese, Bengali and Meitei. In addition, Laskar (2003a) provides a detailed analysis of the syntax and semantics of various classifiers used in Bishnupriya. An analysis of the verbal structure and the tense, mood and aspect categories is provided in Laskar (2003b, 2006, 2008a, b, c). Satyanath and Laskar (2002) is an account of the grammar of Bishnupriya. Studies such as Satyanath and Laskar (2003, 2008b, 2009) present a study of the variation in classifier, clitic marking and the NP structure in Bishnupriya. The main focus of these studies (particularly 2003, 2008b) is on the use and distribution of animacy-based classifier clitics in Bishnupriya. A connection between the variable patterns of classifier marking and the variable NP structure in Bishnupriya is demonstrated in these studies. In Satyanath and Laskar (2009), this variation in linguistic structure is explained in terms of the bilingual identity of the Bishnupriyas. In Satyanath and Laskar (2006, 2008a) an extensive study of the lexicon is undertaken to construct the formation of Bishnupriya. These studies present a profile of contact in which Bishnupriya developed, and also assesses the role of the different language families in the formation of Bishnupriya through the study of the lexicon. All these studies (except Laskar 1996 and Dey 1999) discussed in this paragraph are based on natural data drawn from Hailakandi district in Assam, and are carried out in the quantitative sociolinguistic framework. There is another study by Mishra (2002), which claims that Bishupriya displays all the features of an SOV language and the related universal posited in Greenberg (1963). However, his own data and analysis do not support his assertion.

## 1.3 The Bishnupriyas

The genesis of Bishnupriya had taken place in Manipur. But Bishnupriya is spoken at present in parts of southern Assam, Tripura and Bangladesh. The concentration of the Bishnupriyas in southern Assam, Tripura and Bangladesh might have happened as a result of the exodus of Bishnupriyas from Manipur during the Burmese invasion of Manipur in the period 1819-1826 and inner conflicts in Manipur (Singh 1987, Sinha n.d). There are various accounts available on the origin of the Bishnupriyas (See Laskar 2003a, Satyanath and Laskar 2008a). One account (Sinha 1981) traces the origin of the Bishnupriyas to 6th century and there are other accounts (Allen 1905, Singh 1987), which claim that the origin of the Bishnupriyas had taken place in late 19th century or early 20th century. In Satyanath and Laskar (2008a), we have suggested that the Bishnupriya must have originated mainly as a result of the spread of Hinduism (Vaishnavism) in Manipur in 18th century or in late 17th century.[5] The spread of Vaishnavism brought in a lot of people from west Bengal, southern Bihar, Orissa and pre-dominantly east Bengal to Manipur. However, this study also suggests that the movement of people of the lower strata comprising mainly of cultivators, craftsmen, fishing communities from east Bengal to Manipur for socio-economic reasons had begun even before Hinduism became the state religion in Manipur in the 18th century. The interactions between the language varieties of the people from eastern India and their contact with Tibeto-Burman (primarily Meitei) must have led to the formation of new contact language Bishnupriya (See Satyanath and Laskar 2008a).

### 1.3.1 The Bishnupriyas in Hailakandi

This study deals with the Bishnupriya speech community in Hailakandi district of Assam. Hailakandi is one of the three districts in the Barak Valley of Southern Assam, with an area of 1328.10 square Km.[6] It was constituted as a civil subdivision in 1869 under the colonial rule. Later it was upgraded to a district in 1989. The district shares it border with Karimganj district in the western side, Cachar district in the eastern side and Mizoram in the southern side. In this district, there are two notified towns: Hailakandi and Lala, and

one industrial township Panchgram. Hailakandi town is the district head-quarter where all the administrative and judicial offices are located. It is the hub of all educational, cultural, business and political activities in the district. There are five development blocks such as Algapur, Hailakandi, Lala, Katlicherra and South Hailakandi block. There are three political constituencies: North Hailakandi, Hailakandi (Middle) and South Hailakandi. The present study is located in Hailakandi (Middle).

The economy of the district is primarily dependent on the agricultural sector and its allied enterprises. However, in the organized sector, tea industry is the major industry, which provides employment to a large section of the population. There are 17 tea estates, covering an area of 5570.38 hectares of land. Apart from tea industry, there is a paper mill (HPC) at Panchgram, which provides employment and business opportunities to a large population of the area. Others earn their livelihood from government jobs.

The census of 2001 reports the total population of Hailakandi as 5, 42, 978. The overall literacy rate as per the census of 2001 is 59.80 percent. Table 1.1 shows the distribution of the Bishnupriya population in India.

| ***Place*** | **1971** | **1991** | **2001** |
|---|---|---|---|
| *India* | 43,813 | 59,233 | 77,545 |
| *Hailakandi* | 1,749<br>(30,795) | 2,800<br>(4,49,048) | 5000<br>(5,42,978) |

*Table 1.1 Distribution of Bishnupriya population*

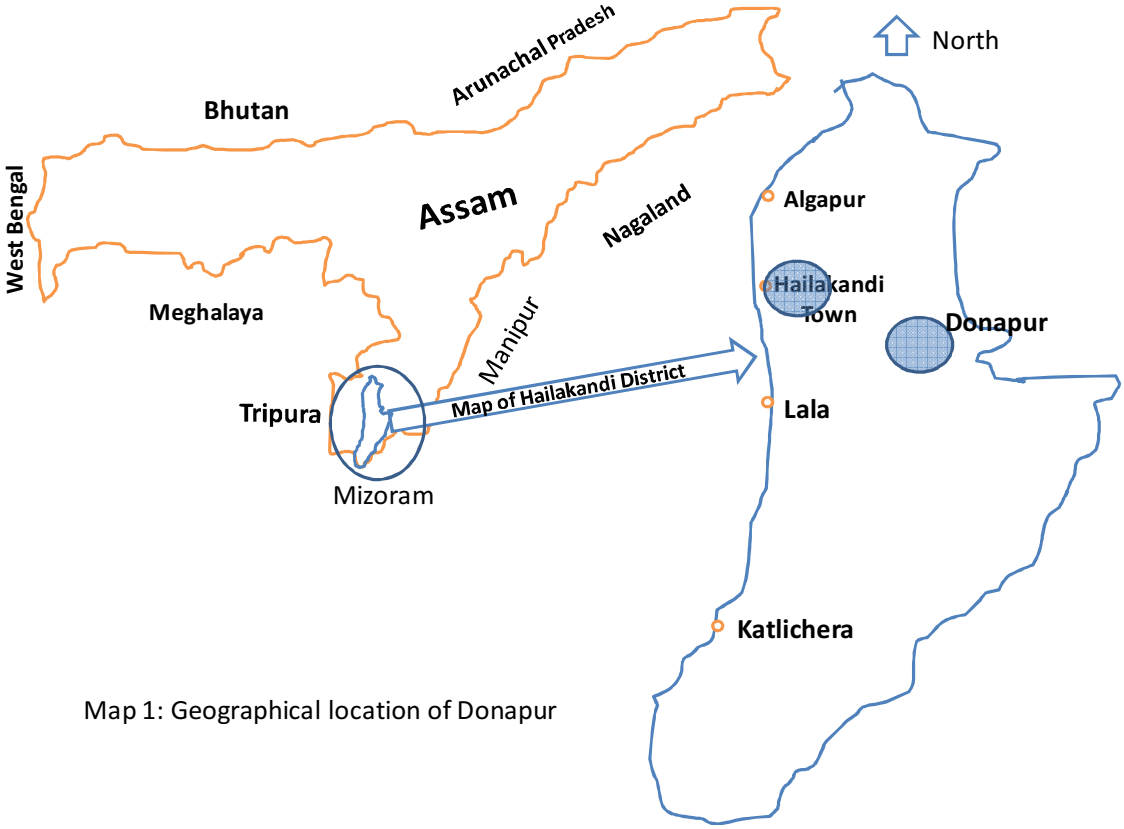
The figures in bracket ( ) refer to the total population of the Hailakandi district.

*Source: Census of India Reports 1971, 1991, 2001 and reports from the Department of Statistics, Hailakandi.*

The population of the district comprises mainly of Bengalis, followed by Bishnupriyas and Meiteis. Mizos, Hmars, Reangs, Nagas, Khasis and Jaintias are also found in the rural belts of the district in small numbers. The tea garden labourers constitute another section of the population of the district. The census report does not provide a linguistic distribution of the population of the district.[7] Bengali is the official language of the district. Standard Bengali (See Chatterjee 1926) is used in education, media and for officiating the written documents in administrative and judicial functions. The local Hailakandi Bengali (henceforth HB) is the lingua franca and is used for all other communication purposes. HB is also used in various programmes in local TV and radio. HB is used in the literary circles as well, and there are many satires and poems written in HB.

### 1.3.2 The Bishnupriyas in Donapur

In Hailakandi district, the Bishnupriyas live in small enclaves in Alidahar, Kanchipur, Nimaipur and Donapur.[8] These villages fall under the various development blocks. The largest concentration of the Bishnupriyas in Hailakandi district is found in Donapur village. It is about 15 km from the Hailakandi town. This study deals with the Bishnupriya speech community located in Donapur village (See map 1). Donapur is situated in Hailakandi (middle) constituency and is well connected with the Hailakandi town. The population of Donapur village comprises of three linguistic groups: Bishnupriyas, Bengalis and Meiteis. Unlike most other Indian villages where caste structure is considered the most important feature of village life, linguistic division and ethnicity form the basic aspect of the social structure of Donapur village (cf. Madan 2002). The settlement pattern in this village is determined by linguistic classification and ethnicity. Within the village there are different enclaves based on linguistic divisions (See Figure 1.1). The Bishnupriya houses in the Bishnupriya enclave stand adjacent to each other. Most of the houses are *pucca* (brick) houses. A few *kutcha* houses (made of bamboo and mud) also exist. There are usually no boundary walls separating the houses. However, in between some houses there is a bamboo fence to prevent the trespassing of animals. A *tulsi* plant is grown over a little raised land in front of every house.




Map 1: Geographical location of Donapur

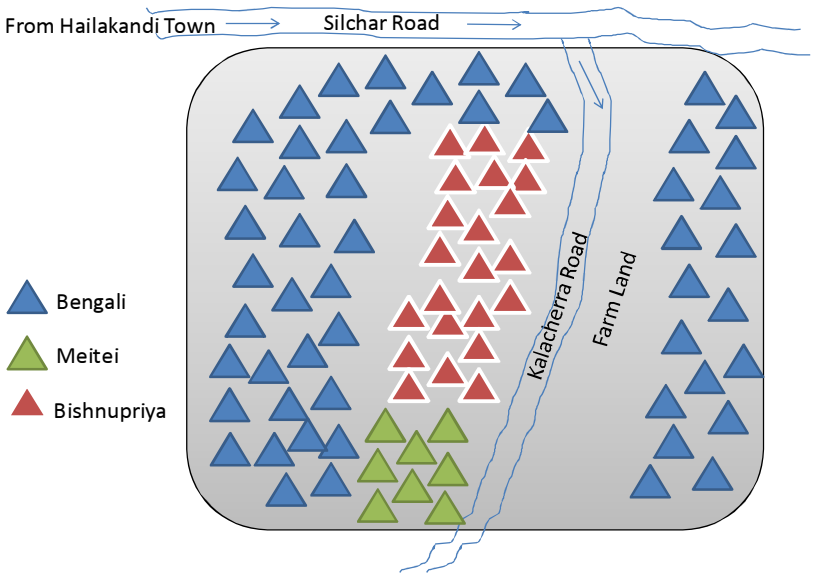



**Figure 1.1: Distribution of Bishnupriya, Meitei and Bengali population in Donapur**

A small temple with photos or idols of Krishna and Radha exists in front of a few houses. In front of every house, there is a shed for animals called *baataan*. These sheds serve several purposes. In the evening cows and buffaloes (used for agricultural purposes) are tied there, and during the day time this place is used by women for weaving clothes, husking, grinding rice and cutting vegetables. So women generally sit there and chat with each other during the day time (many of my interviews were conducted here).

There are a few ponds in the backyard of the houses. Members of two or three houses share a pond. Although the Bishnupriyas live in close proximity with the Bengalis and the Meiteis, there is social segregation between the different ethnic groups. The Bishnupriyas had maintained social-cultural relationships with the Meiteis till the early sixties.[9] However, at present the Bishnupriyas do not have any social relation or interaction with the Meiteis. On the other hand, they have cordial relationship with the Bengalis living in the immediate neighbourhood. In fact, they depend on the Bengali population for many works such as tilling their land etc. The Bengalis come and watch the '*Rasa lila*' performance by the Bishnupriyas.[10]

#### 1.3.2.1 Caste and Class Structure

The Bishnupriyas are all Vaishnavite Hindus and are followers of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. They also worship the indigenous deities of the Meiteis like *Apokpaa* and *Paahaangpaa*. In Bishnupriya society, there are three castes: the *Brahmins*, the *Rajkumars* and the *Kshatriyas*. The Brahmins occupy the highest position in the caste hierarchy. All the religious activities are performed by the Brahmins. Earlier a committee of Brahmins called the "Shinglup" looked after administration of the community in the village. But the power and authority of the Brahmins have declined because the administration of the village is now run by the democratically elected panchayat body. The Rajkumars occupy the next higher position in the caste hierarchy of the Bishnupriyas. In any religious functions they are allotted a place next to the Brahmins. The Kshatriyas belong to the third and the lowest class. Inter-caste and inter-religious marriages are strictly forbidden. Marriage outside the community is not allowed. If a Bishnupriya marries outside the

community, his/her family is excommunicated.[11] Apart from religious functions, the social distance between the different castes is not very rigid. They stay in adjacent houses and dine at each other's residences.

In village studies in India, it has been seen that caste and class often overlap in villages as they share similar relationship in respect to ownership of land and production (Singh 2002). Close resemblance between class and caste hierarchy does not exist in Bishnupriya society in Donapur. Every household cutting across caste possesses some agricultural land. However, the Bishnupriyas depend more on government jobs and salaries for their livelihood. Most of the families have male members serving in the Indian Army. The Bishnupriyas are a very close-knit society and all the members of the village know each other. Members of the entire Bishnupriya community function as a unit with a very dense network.

Stanford and Preston (2009) observe that unlike the variationist analysis of majority languages from urban settings where "social class" assumes an important role, indigenous minority language communities in rural areas do not necessarily have clearly demarcated socio-economic class distinctions. They suggest that in rural studies distinctions in the community are demonstrated in other factors such as clan-level distinctions as in the case of Sui population in China. Construction of social class in Bishnupriya speech community is not easy considering the cohesiveness of the Bishnupriya society. However, taking indices such as occupation, education, and possession of land holding as the indicator of social class (cf. Ash 2002), I have tried to categorize the Bishnupriya society in Donapur into three classes (See Appendix-I):

(i) Upper middle class (UMC)

(ii) Middle class (MC)

(iii) Lower class (LC)

The overwhelming majority of the Bishnupriya population in Donapur belongs to the middle class. The upper middle class and the lower class are represented by a small fraction of the population.

#### 1.3.2.2 Family Structure and Participation of Women in Public Life

The Bishnupriyas live in joint-families, and there is joint-ownership of property. Bishnupriya society is patriarchal and the male head wields a lot of power in the family. The elder son takes up the responsibilities of education and marriage of his younger siblings. He also commands a lot of respect from the other members of his family. The male members of the family are generally the bread winners. Most of them hold government jobs. Those who do not have jobs are engaged in agriculture or small trades. The women essentially look after their homes. Weaving also forms an important activity of the Bishnupriya women. They weave their own traditional clothes at home. A few women hold government jobs. Participation of women in public space is largely confined to cultural activities.

#### 1.3.2.3 Bilingualism: Domains of Interactions

**Home**

The first interaction of Bishnupriyas with Bengalis begins at home. The Bengali women living in the immediate neighbourhoods are employed in many Bishnupriya houses for husking and grinding rice. The Bengali men are appointed for cultivation of rice and digging ponds in many Bishnupriya households. The Bishnupriyas interact with these people in HB. However, it has been observed that small children do not have much interaction with these part time workers. In some families, Bengali tutors are employed to teach the Bishnupriya children (beginning from 9-10 years) the school subjects that are in Standard Bengali. These tutors interact with the children as well as the parents in HB.

**School**

Most of the Bishnupriya children begin their schooling in one of the primary schools in the village. This primary school has two female teachers. Both of them are Bishnupriya. The medium of instruction is Standard Bengali. Bishnupriya is taught as an optional subject.[12] The communication between the teachers and the students in the primary school takes place in Bishnupriya alone as they both belong to the same community. The Bengali and the Meitei children go to other primary schools in the village.

After passing from the village primary school, a majority of the Bishnupriya children join the middle school situated in the village. A few children go to other schools outside the village. Unlike in the primary school, in the middle school there are Bishnupriya, Bengali and Meitei teachers as well as students. All the school subjects are in Standard Bengali, and therefore the medium of instruction is Standard Bengali. The Bishnupriya children use Bishnupriya for intra-group communications and HB for inter-group interactions with others both inside and outside the class-rooms. The teachers interact among themselves and with students in HB. After completion of the middle school education in Donapur, the Bishnupriya children go to the Higher Secondary School in Katlichera, which is situated a kilometer away from the village. It is in this school that the Bishnupriya children come in contact with a large number of Bengalis (both Hindus and Muslims) for the first time. As students of all linguistic backgrounds mingle together, HB is used widely.

Due to the absence of a college in the vicinity, the Bishnupriya students join the college in Hailakandi town for further education. Once, the Bishnupriya boys join college, they move to Hailakandi town. They have to stay in the town till they finish their college education. Boys, who do well in studies, generally go to Silchar (located in the neighbouring district of Cachar) for pursuing higher education.[13] Most of the girls quit their education after higher secondary and only a few manage to continue their college education in Hailakandi town. Girls are not encouraged to continue higher education, instead they take up some other vocations like sewing etc. The dominant population in

the Hailakandi town as well as in the college is Bengali. The Bishnupriya youths integrate well into the Bengali community. They participate in many academic and cultural activities like debates, plays etc in Bengali. Nevertheless, Bishnupriya youths are very conscious of their identity and speak in their own language among themselves even in the midst of the Bengalis.

**Jobs**

The Bishnupriya men take up government jobs after finishing their education. A large section of Bishnupriya men join the police service and army which take them away from the village. They leave behind their family in the village. Others who have government jobs in Hailakandi town or in other parts of Assam move with their family. These people, especially the ones residing in Hailakandi town often visit the village. They take part in all the cultural and religious activities of the village. There are some who commute from the village to their work place in the town. In the offices, people interact in HB among themselves.

**Local Market**

There is a village market in Donapur, where the Meteis and Bengalis sell their locally produced vegetables, fish etc. The Bishnupriyas, Meiteis and Bengalis generally buy vegetables from this market. Bishnupriya men and women go to this market. In the market all the transactions are carried out in HB.

**Other Domains**

The Bishnupriyas like other groups residing in rural areas often frequent the Hailakandi town which is the head-quarter for various purposes. The men folks regularly visit the town for official, medical, business purposes and recreation like movie, sports etc. Women also visit the Hailakandi town very often. Thus outside Bishnupriya community, both in the village and in the town the local Bengali (HB) serves as the most important

language of interaction. It can be heard in the local market, playground, streets and offices. Therefore, though Bishnupriyas use Bishnupriya among themselves, they also use HB on a regular basis.

## 1.4 Methodology

The present study was carried out in the framework of variation and change following the methods pioneered by Labov (1966, 1972, 1984). Like other quantitative sociolinguistic studies, this study is based on a large corpus of natural speech data drawn from a sample of forty-nine speakers and from a variety of interactional settings to have a proper understanding of the linguistic repertoire of the Bishnupriya speech community in Donapur. In addition to the bilingual speech data from the Bishnupriyas in Donapur, there was a need to gather Bengali data as well from the Bengalis to be able to draw a comparison between the Bishnupriya data and the Bengali data. Following the standard practices in Sociolinguistics as developed in Labov (1966, 1972), in the present study two types of techniques such as sociolinguistic interviews and participant observation were utilized. The sociolinguistic interviews were used in obtaining tape recorded natural speech data. Participant observation allowed to closely observe the patterns of linguistic interactions within the Bishnupriyas as well as bilingual patterns of interaction with the non-Bishnupriyas. This study also draws a lot of inputs on methodology from Satyanath's study of Indian speech community in Guyana (See Satyanath 1991).

### 1.4.1 Selection of the Speech Community

After detailed study of the historical background of the community, their social and cultural life, movement patterns, density of population and demography of the region, I selected the Bishnupriya community settled in Donapur village as my subject of study. There are many reasons for selecting Donapur as the locus of study. The largest concentration of Bishnupriyas in Hailakandi district is found in Donapur village. So a socially stratified sample could be obtained from Donapur. Secondly, most of the Bishnupriyas residing presently in Hailakandi town hail from Donapur village. They visit

the village very often and participate in all the social and cultural activities in the village. Members of their families, who live in Donapur village, also visit them quite often. A few people from Hailakandi town were also interviewed. The data from the Bishnupriyas in Hailakandi is geared to explore if there is any difference in the linguistic behaviour of the urban speakers and the rural speakers.

### 1.4.2 Sampling of the Speech Community

The total population of Donapur comprises of 1880 people, out of which about 600 are Bishnupriyas. There are about 70-75 Bishnupriya families residing in Donapur. Unlike in urban settings where there are separate neighbourhoods, there is no segregation of population in terms of neighbourhood in Donapur. All the Bishnupriya families in Donapur live in adjacent houses forming a cline. There is absence of any boundary wall between the houses. Caste though important in the religious and the socio-cultural life of the Bishnupriyas, is not important in the residential distribution of the Bishnupriyas. Bishnupriyas across different castes and class live in adjacent houses. The Bishnupriya habitat in Donapur stands as one unit. Figure 1.1 shows the distribution of the different linguistic groups in Donapur. The Bishnupriya habitat in Donapur is surrounded by Bengali population on three sides (the north, west and east), and by Meiteis on one side (south). The Bishnupriya locality is separated from the Meitei enclave on the southern part and the Bengali households on the northern side by a few yards only. However, there is some space between the Bishnupriya houses and the Bengalis residing in the western side and the eastern side.

Figure 1.2 shows the composition of the sample used in this study.[14] The sample in this study comprised of fifteen Bishnupriya families from Donapur and five from Hailakandi town.[15] The five Bishnupriya families from Hailakandi town that I had included in my sample also hailed from Donapur. The Bengali speech data was elicited from four Bengali families from Donapur and four from Hailakandi town.

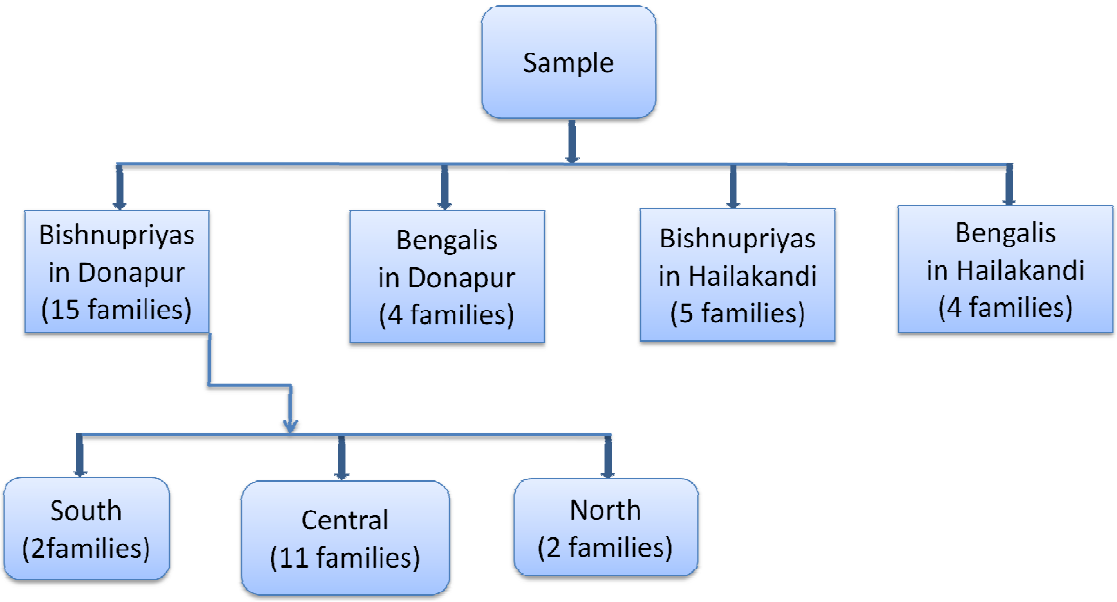



**Figure 1.2 Speaker sample**

Initially, I had selected only the central part of the Bishnupriya enclave because I had observed in my earlier visit to the village that the density of population is higher in the central part of the Bishnupriya enclave. Given the fact that the central part of the village is densely populated, this part would provide me a sample which would allow social stratification of the language. However, as majority of the Bishnupriyas belonged to the middle class, my sample comprised of a large representation of middle class. Moreover, a Lower Primary (LP) school and a community centre are located in this part.[16] The central part would also therefore provide scope for closer and detailed observation of the natural speech in variety of interactional settings. The Bishnupriyas form a cohesive group and very close knit network structure exists in the society. I was introduced to members of one family in the central part of the Bishnupriya enclave in Donapur. With the help of network method I developed contact with the other families living in this part.

I also interviewed families living on the two edges, that is, northern part (close to the Bengalis) and the southern part, the ones living close to the Meiteis. The strong network structure of the Bishnupriyas helped me in developing contact with these people. Thus, I could include in my sample families living on both the extreme northern boundary as well as the southern boundary. The Bishnupriya sample in Donapur comprised of eleven families from the central part and two families each from the northern and the southern part.

### 1.4.3 Field Work

Once the locality was selected, my next job was how to make an entry into the community. My engagement with Bishnupriya over the past few years helped in building contact with the community. I got in touch with some people from Donapur village, who at present live in Hailakandi town. Being a resident of Hailakandi, it was not difficult for me to make initial contacts with the Bishnupriyas in Hailakandi. Nishi Sinha, a school teacher and her husband Rajen Sinha helped me in making the first entry into the village. My first visit to the Donapur village was with this couple. They first introduced me to Satyendra and his family. Satyendra is a retired principal of a school and at present practices homeopathy in the village. He and his family members are held in high esteem by the other members of his community. In a village like Donapur, movement of any outsider, especially, a woman is looked with suspicion and not approved. So it was essential to get the approval of the elderly and respected members of the community before entering the community. I was introduced to two other families who lived adjacent to Satyendra's house on the same day. I was introduced as a student of Delhi University, who is studying the social and cultural life of the Bishnupriyas. Soon I got acquainted with many families and could visit the village without any objection. My own competence in Bishnupriya and my association with Hailakandi made my position as fieldworker a little easier. Each family was visited a number of times in order to be able to interview different members of the family. The Bishnupriyas frequently visit each other. Very often I got invitation from such visitors at the place of the interview. Soon I became a familiar face in the Bishnupriya neighbourhood and had developed

acquaintance with many families. The Bishnupriyas are engaged in an identity struggle (cf. Satyanath and Laskar 2009) and so the male members of the community were very eager to talk to me about this issue particularly. They would talk to me at length regarding their grievances and would also request me to espouse their struggle. But with the women, things were different, they enjoyed spending time with me and would tell me stories relating to their daily life etc.

In a Bishnupriya society, a young daughter-in-law covers her head and does not come out in front of her father-in-law, elder brother-in-law and strangers. She remains within the confines of her home. It was a challenge to be able to catch up with them. Even if the male members were away, the elderly female members (mother-in-law, elder sister-in-law) would sit down to chat with me, and not give them any opportunity to talk to me. The younger daughters-in-law were initially hesitant to speak to me in the presence of other members of the family. However, after many visits to each family, I could interview many of these young women. As I visited the families I had befriended a lot of young people. I would chat with them in their homes or meet them with their peer groups at home or in the playground in the evening. I would also visit them during their break time in school. I had developed very friendly relation with the children as well. They often sought my help to finish their home-work. During my trip, almost every-day I spent a few hours with the children.

I had also collected data from Bishnupriyas currently residing in Hailakandi town. The Bishnupriya families, where the parents or at least one parent is from Donapur village were part of my sample. In the town, their residences are not concentrated in one neighbourhood. They are spread across the town. Unlike in the village, where there are joint families, most of the families residing in the town are nuclear families. They all know each other and maintain close relationship with each other. As I am a resident of this town, I knew a few Bishnupriya families quite well. First I visited one such family and told them about my project. This family provided me the links of many other Bishnupriya families in the town. I visited these families a number of times and interviewed them.

I had collected Bengali data as well from the Bengali localities in Donapur. I used my own Bengali network to build contacts with the Bengali families in Donapur.

### 1.4.4 Data Collection

A variety of linguistic codes appear in the speech of bilingual speech community (Sankoff 1980). A large corpus of speech data from everyday life is required to elicit sufficient corpus representing the varieties of linguistic repertoires present in a bilingual community. Poplack (1988) with respect to borrowing observes that collecting bilingual data is very complex and it requires several hours of speech to yield only a few dozen of required tokens. The data for the present study was gathered over a period of seven months through sociolinguistic interviews and participant observation. A total of forty-nine Bishnupriya speakers were interviewed and was tape-recorded (See Appendix-II). The sample of Bishnupriya speakers ranged from four to ninety-one year old subjects. These speakers yielded 76 hours of recoded speech. The collected data presents three kinds of speech data that encompass the verbal repertoire of the Bishnupriyas. These include (i) Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data which appears when the Bishnupriyas interact with each other, (ii) Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched (C-S) data which surfaces in the interaction between themselves and also with the Bengalis, and (iii) Bengali monolingual (L2) data which occurs when the Bishnupriyas interact with the Bengalis.

The Bishnupriyas speak in Bishnupriya among themselves. They speak in Bengali with Bengalis only. Though they generally do not speak in Bengali among themselves, code-switching from Bishnupriya to Bengali is a common phenomenon among the Bishnupriyas. It did not require the presence of a Bengali to make the Bishnupriya speaker indulge in code-switching from Bishnupriya to Bengali. At times, code-switching was done to draw attention to something or tease each other. It is difficult to figure out the cause of the alternations from Bishnupriya to Bengali. The Bengali speech (L2) from the Bishnupriyas in my speech sample surfaced when I presented myself as a Bengali and spoke to them in Bengali only. Otherwise, most of the time when I would use

Bishnupriya, they would speak to me in Bishnupriya only. The Bengali that is discussed here in this section refers to HB. Apart from Bishnupriya speakers, twelve Bengali speakers were also interviewed (See Appendix-III).

#### 1.4.4.1 Interview

In sociolinguistic research, tape recorded interview forms the most important method of data collection (Labov 1972, 1984, Wolfram and Fasold 1974). For the present study, an interview schedule was prepared based on Labovian model of linguistic change and variation. This was adapted to the norms of the Bishnupriya community. Modules for interviews were developed keeping in mind various social categories such as age, sex etc. Modules related to politics, Bishnupriya conflict, corruption, unemployment and education were very successful with men. Modules relating to personal life, children, marriage, hardship, festival, recipe and mythology worked well with women. Topics relating to fashion, reality shows in TV, love affairs and sports clicked well with the younger generation.

The interviews represent here spontaneous and natural speech, and were generally of 90 minutes duration. Many of the interviews went on for more than 90 minutes. Extreme care was taken to minimize the effect of the presence of the field-worker and shun any other hurdles, in order to be able to elicit natural speech. The interviews were taken in a variety of settings. Most of the interviews at home were conducted in the presence of other family members. Once the topic was broached, there was minimum intervention from the interviewer. The informants were encouraged to carry on the conversation without any interruption. The presence of other members proved to be advantageous. They would add more information and often remind the informants about some other exciting incidents. This helped in making the conversation more informal and spontaneous. The conversation between the two gave me an opportunity to observe any difference in the linguistic behaviour of the informants. Once the interview with one informant was over, the other members were encouraged to narrate their stories. In this way efforts were made to interview all the members of a family. Very often it had

happened that one member would ask the other member to narrate some stories and in the process would become himself/herself enthusiastic to speak. Satyanath (1991) talking about her fieldwork experience with the Indian community in Guyana also mentions that she conducted a great majority of her interviews with multiple members of family present. She had to learn to turn this to her advantage and at the same time discourage multiple conversations breaking out simultaneously. Though every fieldworker in some sense appropriately modifies the methodology to suit its needs, many insights that Satyanath (1991) provides were directly relevant to my fieldwork.

Many of the strategies that Satyanath adopted in her study especially while interviewing younger speakers and very young children were successfully utilized in the present study as well. Accordingly, the younger members (adolescents) were interviewed generally in groups (See Labov et al. 1968). Presence of friends or peer groups made the situation more relaxed and natural. Interview sessions with the younger groups readily turned into interesting events. They made fun of each other and often shared each other's secrets. Sometimes they became very animated when talking about their favourite participants in reality shows in TV, game of cricket and asked for my opinions. Some of the group interviews were conducted in play grounds outside their home, where they usually gather in the evening.

The techniques used with the small children were different from that used with other age groups. Small children were recorded with the help of the elder members of their family. Recording of small children were done by engaging them in some activities and conversations.

#### 1.4.4.2 Participant Observation

The data collected through interviews was supplemented by participant observation. Participant observation of the bilingual linguistic behaviour of the Bishnupriya speech community in a variety of interactional settings was done. Detailed notes were made based on the observations. The informants could not be interviewed and tape recorded in

public places. So it was only through participant observation that I was able to observe the public interaction of the Bishnupriya speakers and unfold other information about their linguistic behaviour and overcome the short comings of interviews.

In the village when I visited the families, I observed how the people interacted with each other, that is, their family members, neighbours and outsiders. I made close observation of the pattern of interaction between Bishnupriyas and their Bengali workers. During the afternoons women sit in front of their looms and weave their traditional clothes. Many other women sit near them and do errands like peel beans, cut vegetables. The children play around them. Sometimes, the men also sit and chat with them. This is also the time when Bengali speaking vendors come to sell clothes, utensil etc. So this is an ideal place to observe the natural linguistic behaviour of the Bishnupriyas. I often sat near them, and told them that I wanted to see how they make clothes. They would smile and never objected to my presence. I could observe how they interacted with members of their own sex and age group, members of other sex, small children, and how they bargained with the Bengali vendors. In the village, two, three women, who are generally friends bathe together in the ponds. They indulged in lot of gossips while washing clothes and bathing. This place provided them the privacy and time, which they could not get in their homes. I accompanied them to the pond and it constituted an important site for observing the natural interaction between women. I made trips to the village market pretending to buy some food stuff. In this place I could observe the speech behaviour of Bishnupriyas with the other linguistic groups living in the same village. Donapur is connected by regular van services to Hailakandi town. This is another place where the public interaction could be observed. I also had the opportunity to attend a Bishnupriya wedding ceremony and a *Rasa lila* function where I could observe the group interaction of the Bishnupriyas. Bishnupriyas in Hailakandi town lived in Bengali neighbourhoods. I would walk around the lanes when people stand at their gates and talk to their neighbours in the evening. I also visited many offices where Bishnupriya people worked. Parents of children often go to the school to drop and bring their wards. A lot of interaction takes place between the Bengali parents and the Bishnupriya parents outside the school gates where they wait for their children. All these places gave me the opportunity to observe

the variety of linguistic repertoire and see many dimensions of the linguistic behaviour of the Bishnupriya speech community.

## 1.5 Chapterization

This dissertation is organized in five chapters.

1. Chapter I is an introduction to the dissertation. It provides a discussion of the literature on bilingualism and Bishnupriya. A discussion on the methods and approaches adopted in this study for data collection is provided as well. It also provides information on the speech community and the nature of bilingualism among the Bishnupriyas.

2. Chapter II provides a comprehensive account of the grammar and semantics of the tense, aspect and mood categories, and forms that are used to express these categories in Bishnupriya and HB, with which Bishnupriya is in contact in Hailakandi. As Bishnupriya emerged as a result of contact between Indo-Aryan (particularly Eastern Bengali dialects) and Tibeto-Burman (primarily Meitei), a brief discussion on the tense, aspect and mood forms in the various relevant languages involved in the formation of Bishnupriya is given as well.

3. Chapter III tries to delimit the variability in tense, aspect and mood marking in Bishnupriya through a quantitative analysis. The role of various linguistic factors responsible for conditioning the distribution of the tense, aspect and mood variants in Bishnupriya and HB are analyzed. As Bishnupriya shares many of the tense, aspect and mood forms with HB, a comparison of the linguistic constraints on the tense, aspect and mood forms in these two language varieties is provided to be able to assess the relationship and nature of interaction between Bishnupriya and HB.

4. The results of quantitative analysis in Chapter III demonstrated that patterns of language use is the most important constraint for conditioning variability across the tense, aspect and mood categories in Bishnupriya. Thus, in Chapter IV, cross-tabulations of the tense, aspect and mood variants by patterns of language use and other linguistic and social constraints are done to study the relationship of the patterns of language use with other constraints. This helps in understanding the interrelationship between the different linguistic codes of the bilingual Bishnupriyas.

5. Chapter V provides a summary and conclusion of the dissertation.

## Notes

[1] Borrowing includes 'loan-words' which are used frequently and 'nonce' which is used only once (that is lone) (See Poplack 1988, Poplack et al. 1988).

[2] Haugen (1950, cited in Poplack, Sankoff and Miller 1988) classifies the stages of bilingual acquisition ranging from a pre-bilingual period in which borrowed words demonstrate almost complete but irregular substitution of native for foreign phones, to one of childhood bilingualism, where donor language phones are systematically reintroduced.

[3] Studies such as Gingras (1974) and Pfaff (1975) also indirectly support this.

[4] Competition Model was developed by MacWhinney 1987, Bates and MacWhinney 1989.

[5] Vaishnavism is a sect of Hinduism which believes in the worship of Vishnu.

[6] The other two districts are Cachar and Karimganj.

[7] However, information on the distribution of Bishnupriya population in Hailakandi district was provided by the Department of Statistics, Hailakandi.

[8] The names of villages used in this study are pseudo-names.

[9] The Bishnupriyas share with the Meiteis religion, food, dress and many cultural practices. The Meiteis refer to themselves as Manipuri. The Bishnupriyas also refer to themselves as Bishnupriya-Manipuri. The Meiteis resented the use of the term Manipuri by the Bishnupriyas and consequently a serious conflict arose between the Bishnupriyas and the Meiteis around the period 1960s (See for details Satyanath and Laskar 2009). Despite the cultural affinities between the two communities, they do not see eye to eye today.

[10] *Rasa lila*, a devotional dance-drama celebrating the love of Lord Krishna and Radha forms the main cultural engagement of the Bishnupriyas.

[11] This is perhaps the reason why girls are not encouraged to go for higher education, and are married off early.

[12] Bishnupriya has been introduced as an optional language in the primary level in schools in the state of Assam.

[13] Silchar is an important center for education for the whole of Southern Assam. It has many schools, colleges, a central university, a medical college and an engineering college (NIT).

[14] Please see Appendices II and III.

[15] Hailakandi in figure 1.2 refers to Hailakandi town.

[16] The Bengalis from the surrounding areas also visit this centre quite often for various works.

# Chapter - II

## Tense, Aspect and Mood in Bishnupriya and Hailakandi Bengali

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter attempts to develop a comprehensive account of the grammar and semantics of tense (T), aspect (A) and mood (M) categories, and forms that are used to express these categories in Bishnupriya. The primary objective of this chapter is to delineate the nature of the TAM categories operating in Bishnupriya (henceforth BP) and Hailakandi Bengali (henceforth HB) spoken in the same speech community. Considering the importance of many Tibeto-Burman languages, primarily Meitei, and varieties of Eastern Bengali in the formation of Bishnupriya, this chapter also provides a brief discussion of the TAM forms in the relevant language varieties. The TAM categories and forms in BP are discussed in the backdrop of the existing theoretical literature which elaborates on how the TAM categories are understood and treated across languages.

### 2.1 Definition: Tense, Aspect and Mood

Languages have different strategies for describing and conceptualizing time reference and temporality. A great deal of variation has been observed across languages in the delineation of temporality and issues pertaining to it. This has created a great interest among linguists in the role of categories such as tense (T), aspect (A) and mood (M) in the grammar of languages. Various definitions have been offered by linguists for the tense, aspect and mood categories. Comrie (1985) considers tense a deictic category, that is, it relates the time of the situation with reference to some other time which is usually the moment of speech or any other reference time. In Comrie's definition, the moment of speech or the reference time is the cutoff point from which time of the actual event or state is measured. Any situation which occurs before the moment of speech is past tense, similarly situations located after or subsequent to the moment of speech represent the

future tense and situations that are simultaneous with the moment of speech are treated as present tense category.[1] Traditionally, a distinction is made between absolute tense and relative tense. Absolute tense refers to the tense, which takes the present moment as deictic centre (reference point), and relative tense refers to a tense, which does not include the present moment as the deictic centre (cf. Comrie 1985, Dahl 1985).[2]

Aspects are said to be "different ways of looking at the internal temporal constituency of a situation" (Comrie 1976:3). Aspects view the internal temporal structure of a situation and designate the situation as durative, repetitive, frequent, completed, inchoative etc.

Mood does not refer to the time of the location of the situation but looks at the "reality status" of the situation. The "reality status" can be understood as the grammaticalized expression of the location of the event or state in either the real world or in some hypothetical world (Elliott 2000). Mood conveys whether the events, processes or states are evaluated as real or unreal by the speakers of the language. Whaley (1997:219) defines mood as a grammatical category through which speakers of a language can indicate whether they believe that an event or state actually occurs, does not occur, or has the potential to occur. Various terminologies such as actual and non-actual, factive and non-factive, realis and irrealis, actual and potential have been used in the literature to distinguish between the real and unreal situation (Chung and Timberlake 1985, Feldman 1986, Elliott 2000). In this study, I use the terms "realis" and "irrealis" to refer to the mood categories. However, the distinction between realis and irrealis is rather complex in languages. Languages may differ from each other in terms of how they conceptualize an event or state as real, actual or unreal. Realis and irrealis have been a contentious issue and whether they should be treated as a grammatical category has been questioned by some (Bybee et al. 1994).[3]

### 2.1.1 Interaction of Tense, Aspect and Mood

The categories tense, aspect and mood interact and impinge on each other, and it is very difficult to treat them as separate and neatly delineated categories (Chung and Timberlake 1985, Dahl 1985, Bybee et al. 1994, Ping and Shirai 2000, Dahl and Velupillai 2005). For instance, there is a correlation between past tense and perfective aspect, present tense and imperfective aspect, future tense and irrealis mood, non-future tense and realis mood. The same grammatical form can connote the semantics of the tense, the aspect and the mood categories. A typology of languages is proposed based on the grammatical opposition that languages make between past/non-past and future/non-future distinction (Chung and Timberlake 1985, Bhat and Ningomba 1995). It has also been argued that a typological classification of languages as tense prominent, mood prominent or aspect prominent can be made based on the relative degree of prominence that a language accords to one or other of these verbal categories (Bhat 1999a, Singler 1990). However, there are also some who argue against such typological classifications (Dahl and Velupillai 2005).[4]

**2.1.2** The tense, aspect and mood categories fall in the domain of verbal morphology. The TAM categories are encoded by employing inflectional morphology, derivational morphology and/or periphrastic constructions.

## 2.2 TAM in Contact Languages

Though much of the discussion on TAM has appeared in theoretical studies of non-contact languages, studies of contact languages, too have contributed significantly to the understanding of these categories. These studies have enriched the domain of many of the TAM categories. These include discussion on anterior tense, punctual/non-punctual aspect, realis and irrealis mood categories. Many of these studies, especially the sociolinguistic studies based on rich archive of spoken data have helped us to understand these notions and their development in the contact languages (Sankoff 1980, Satyanath 1991).

The shared similarities between the properties of creoles, especially in their TAM categories, have prompted many creolists to postulate the role of "universals" in the emergence of the TAM categories in a newly formed contact language (Bickerton 1984, McWhorter 2001). The similarities between the TAM categories of creoles have been a starting point in Bickerton's Language Bioprogram Hypothesis.[5] Bickerton (1981, 1984) argued that the classical TMA system includes one preverbal marker to mark anterior tense (simple past for states and past before past for actions), one to mark the irrealis mood (future and conditional) and one to mark the non-punctual aspect (progressive and habitual). He also proposed that these three markers follow the order: tense, mood and aspect.[6] This position has been contested by many studies of creole languages, which revealed that creoles have a complex TAM system and do not adhere to the neatly categorized simplified version of TMA system proposed by Bickerton (Satyanath 1991, Winford 2000b).

There are many studies which demonstrate the role of universals, language internal change and the substrate influence in the emergence of TAM markers in creoles (Muysken 1981, Mulhausler 1986, Lefebvre 1996, 1998, Migge 2006, Winford 2006.)

### 2. 3 Language Contact and the TAM Categories in Bishnupriya (BP)

BP being a contact language with roots in both Tibeto-Burman languages, Meitei in particular and in Indo-Aryan languages, particularly Eastern Bengali dialects, in the following sections I will provide a brief discussion on the TAM categories and forms in these relevant language varieties that have contributed to the formation of BP.

#### 2.3.1 TAM in Tibeto-Burman Languages (Grierson 1903)

An exhaustive survey of the TAM categories in the Tibeto-Burman languages (particularly the languages that are spoken in Manipur) cited in Grierson (1903) shows that many varieties of the Tibeto-Burman languages share certain common characteristics with regard to their TAM system. These features can be summed up in the following:

(i) Many languages show future/non-future distinction, where the non-future subsumes both the past and the present tense.

(ii) Within the non-future, the root alone can be used to denote the present and the past.

(iii) Where there is a marker for past tense, it can be used in non-past (present) contexts as well.

(iv) The progressive and habitual situations are not differentiated.

### 2.3.2 TAM in Meitei

In this section, I provide a brief description of the Meitei TAM categories following Bhat and Ningomba (1995) and Chelliah (1997). Comrie (1985: 51) observes that Burmese does not have tense, that is, "time reference *per se* is not grammaticalized." Time reference in Burmese according to him corresponds to realis and irrealis particles. The realis comprises of the present and the past time reference, whereas the irrealis includes the future time reference. Bhat and Ningomba (1995: 360) state that Tibeto-Burman languages accord greater prominence to mood than to tense and aspect. But they observe that Meitei is different from other Tibeto-Burman languages as it does not reflect many characteristics of mood-prominent languages.[7] It has been claimed in both Bhat and Ningomba (1995) and Chelliah (1997) that the tense distinction in Meitei is primarily between future and non-future. The suffix for denoting future is *gəni* (*gə* plus copula *ni*) and the non-future suffix is *li*.[8] For instance, see examples (1)-(3).

(1) əy-na maŋon-də cithi əmə **i-gə-ni**
I-Nom he-Loc letter one write-Fut-Cop
I will write him a letter. (Bhat and Ningomba 1995: 361)

(2) naŋ **ču- gə-ni**
rain fall-Fut-Cop
It will rain (today) (Chelliah 1997: 231)

(3) məhak-na tebəl -də cəphu **khil-li**
he-Nom table-Loc pot place-Non-Fut
He placed the pot on the table. (Bhat and Ningomba 1995: 365)

Corresponding to the forms *gəni* and *li*, there are two negative suffixes *loy* (alternants are *roy*, *moy*) and *de* (also realized as *te*) for expressing future and non-future distinctions as in (4)-(5). Chelliah (1997) considers *kə* as 'potential' and *loy* as 'non-potential' which indicate the potential (non) occurrence of an action or attainment of state.[9]

(4) məhak ləphoy-du **ca- roy**
he banana-that eat-Fut-Neg
He will not eat that banana. (Bhat and Ningomba 1995: 368)

(5) məhak ləphoy-du **ca-de**
he banana-that eat-Non-Fut-Neg
He did not eat that banana. (Bhat and Ningomba 1995: 368)

The non-future suffix *li* generally denotes past meanings when used with dynamic verbs and present meaning in the case of stative verbs (Bhat and Ningomba 1995: 366). However, the stative verbs can denote past meanings with the help of temporal adverbs and on the other hand, the contexts also can provide a present habitual interpretation of the dynamic verbs. The future and non-future markers can also be used with other aspectual and modal affixes.

The habitual suffix is *gən* and it can occur with future, non-future, perfect and progressive suffixes. For instance, the non-future suffix *li* when used with the habitual suffix *gən* provides a present habitual reading as in (6).

(6) məhak nuŋthin- də **ca-gəl-li**
he afternoon -Loc eat-Hab-Non-Fut
He usually eats in the afternoon. (Bhat and Ningomba1995: 385)

The suffix *li* denotes present meaning when used with habitual *gən*. However, non-future *li* with habitual *gən* can also denote past habitual meaning provided the past meaning is specified by a temporal adverb or a completive affix *ləm*.

The perfect is marked by suffix *le* (*lə*) and it denotes a past event with a present relevance. The perfect marker *le* can occur with other tense and mood suffixes. The perfect affix *le* when used with completive affix *ləm* (*rəm*) indicates an event with a past relevance and when it is used with future marker it connotes an event that has future relevance. The perfect marker when not accompanied by any other suffix provides present perfect interpretation as in (7).

(7) məhak bəjar -da **cət -le**
he market-Loc go-Perf
He has gone to the market. (He is not here) (Bhat and Ningomba 1995: 374)

The perfect suffix *le* when used with the habitual *gən* indicates that the habitual event started to occur from a particular point of time as illustrated in (8).

(8) məhak tən **ca- gəl-le**
he bread eat Hab-Perf
He has been eating bread (from a specified time).
(Bhat and Ningomba 1995: 376)

The progressive suffix is *li* (*ri*) and it denotes action that is being carried out in the past, present or future. The progressive *li* generally invokes a present progressive meaning as shown in (9).

(9) məhak həytup **ca-ri**
he apple eat-Prog
He is eating an apple (now). (Bhat and Ningomba 1995: 382)

The stative verbs marked by *li* indicate persistence of the state at the time of speaking as in (10).

(10) məhak əy-bu **saw-ri**
he I-Acc angry-Prog
He is still angry with me. (Bhat and Ningomba 1995: 383)

The progressive suffix *li* when used with the non-future negative marker *de* provides a present durative meaning. The marker *li* when used with future marker *gə* denotes future progressive, and when it is used with completive marker *ləm*, it expresses past progressive. Bhat and Ningomba cited another progressive marker *khi*, which can be used only with markers denoting future *gəni* and *loy*. However, Chelliah rejects *khi* as an aspect marker as it does not deal with the temporal constituency of a situation.[10]

The completive aspect affix *ləm* may denote future or past completions of events depending on the suffixes with which it co-occurs. The occurrence of a tense marker is obligatory with the completive marker.[11] The counterfactuals are formed by affixing completive affix *ləm* with potential *kə* and /or non-potential *loy* and *tə, təw* or *toy*.

The directional markers, case suffixes and quantifier suffixes also convey various aspectual functions. In addition to affixes, there are verbs with inherent aspectual characteristics.

There are various modal verbs (classified as epistemic and deontic) to indicate modal meanings. These function as auxiliaries to main verbs in that the various verb ending suffixes are attached to them and the main verbs precede them in their infinitive form.

Grierson (1903) also notes that in Meitei the temporal distinction is made between future and non-future. The future is expressed by *ga*. There is no distinction between present and past, and the root alone may be used to denote both. But he mentions that other affixes, such as *i, ē, ni, li, lī* are added to the root. The affix *i* is treated as an assertive suffix which is used both in the present and past as in (11)-(12) and the suffix *ē* is used to denote the past as in (13). The other suffixes *ni, li, lī* are treated as compound forms.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (11) | cha-i | ‘he eats’ | (Gierson 1903. III. III: 28) |
| (12) | chup-i | ‘he kissed’ | (Gierson 1903. III. III: 28) |
| (13) | niŋ- ē | ‘he wished’ | (Gierson 1903. III. III: 28) |

The examples cited by Grierson suggest that *li* (*ri*) functions as both past marker (See 14) and progressive marker as in (15).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (14) | chat-li | ‘he went’ | (Grierson 1903. III. III: 28) |
| (15) | san sel-li | ‘cattle he is grazing’ | (Grierson 1903. III. III: 28) |

The form *le* is interpreted as both past and present perfect marker as in (16) and (17).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (16) | ai-naa-phu-re | ‘I struck/I have struck’ | (Grierson 1903. III. III: 28) |
| (17) | ai-chat-le | ‘I went/I have gone’ | (Grierson 1903. III. III: 28) |

To sum up, it can be said that in Meitei, the temporal distinction is primarily between future and non-future indicated by *gəni* and *li*. The non-future marker *li* does not distinguish between present and past. This division is justified considering that there is no distinction between (11) and (12). The non-future affix also has multiple functions as indicated in (14)-(15). The temporal adverbs and contexts help in anchoring temporal distinctions. Meitei has rich aspectual system designated by various affixes. The aspectual functions are performed by various affixes such as *gən* (habitual), *li* (progressive), *le* (perfect), *ləm* (completive) and others. Apart from these affixes, there are other forms like directional markers, case suffixes and other forms which also convey aspectual functions. The aspectual markers combine with the temporal markers to encode temporal and aspectual connotations. The modal functions are indicated by many modal verbs and modal suffixes.

### 2.3.3 TAM in Bengali

The discussion in this section refers to three varieties of Bengali: Eastern Bengali, HB and Standard Bengali.[12] Eastern Bengali contributed maximally to the formation of BP (See Satyanath and Laskar 2008a). HB, the Bengali spoken in Hailakandi is an extension of Eastern Bengali. Standard Bengali is the official language and the language of education in Hailakandi. Thus Standard Bengali also has a role in defining the linguistic repertoire of the different linguistic groups in Hailakandi district. There exists a substantial body of literature on Bengali. Nevertheless, there are not many studies on varieties of Eastern Bengali. The description of the TAM categories and forms in Eastern Bengali that is provided in this section is based on Chatterjee (1926). Chatterjee (1926) is considered a seminal and the most important work on Bengali varieties. He dwells on the historical development of the phonology and morphology in all the varieties of Bengali. The TAM categories are indicated in Bengali by attaching inflectional affixes to the verb stem. Based on Chatterjee (1926), the following observations can be made regarding the description of the TAM in Standard Bengali and Eastern dialects of Bengali:

(i) The past is marked by *l* in both Standard Bengali and Eastern Bengali.[13]

(ii) The present tense can be used in the past in historical narrative as in (18).

(18) gela bacar jakhan aami Kaaši jaai (expected past form *giyaa chilaam*)
last year when ISg Kashi go
When I went to Benaras last year. (Chatterjee 1926: 949)

(iii) The future is expressed by suffix *b* in Standard Bengali. However, Chatterjee (1926: 967) notes the use of *m* and *ŋ* with first person instead of *b* in many Bengali dialects. In Eastern Bengali, the suffix *t* is used to indicate future.

(iv) The present progressive is indicated by the verbal form *ite* plus the substantive verb *aach* as in *kariteche* 'is doing'. Chatterjee (1926: 1019) argues that *aa* of *aach* is absorbed by the preceding *e* of *ite*, whereas in the Eastern Bengali dialects, the full forms occur, as in *karite+aache*. But in the Standard colloquial Bengali, the form *ch or cch* (contracted form of *aach*) is used in to indicate

progressive meaning as in *korche* or *kocche* 'is doing'.

(v) The past progressive is formed by verbal form *ite* plus the past tense form of the root *aach*, as in *karitechila* (in Standard Literary Bengali), *karite+aachila* (in Eastern Bengali) 'was doing'. However, in Standard colloquial Bengali, the past progressive is indicated by *ch* or *cch* plus the past marker *l* as in *korchilo* or *kocchilo* 'was doing'.

(vi) The future progressive forms are made of *ite* plus the root *thaak* plus the future affix, as in *karite thaakibe* 'will be doing'.

(vii) In Eastern Bengali dialects *s* is used as perfect only, as in *korse* 'has done', *korsilo* 'had done'.

(viii) The form *r* is used for progressive in East Bengali dialects.

(viii) The past conditional or habitual is indicated by inflecting *it* with the personal endings as an ordinary past form e, g, *jadi karitaam* 'if I did'.

### 2.3.4 TAM in Eastern Bengali

In this section I discuss the TAM forms in Eastern Bengali deduced from the texts and descriptions given in Grierson (1903). The various TAM markers used in Eastern Bengali are provided in table 2.1. Gierson observes that the Bengali spoken in Cachar is the most eastern outpost of the language, and is same as the language of Eastern Sylhet. It is to be noted that Hailakandi was a subdivision of Cachar till 1989. The TAM markers of Bengali spoken in Cachar district resemble the TAM markers of other varieties of Eastern Bengali. Though I have compared all the varieties of Eastern Bengali that are cited in Grierson, I have focused primarily on the variety spoken in Cachar District as it is more relevant to the present study. The examples in (19)-(29) are taken from texts from Cachar provided in Grierson (1903).

| | TAM Categories | Forms |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Present* | *Ø* |
| 2 | *Past* | *l* |
| 3 | *Future* | *m ~ b ~ t* |
| 4 | *Perfect* | *ch(ts)* |
| 5 | *Past Habitual* | *t* |
| 6 | *Pluperfect* | *ch(ts)-i-l* |
| 7 | *Imperative* | *Ø* |
| 8 | *Periphrastic Present/ Progressive* | *te-s ~ r* |

*Table 2.1 TAM markers in Eastern Bengali (Grierson 1903.V. I: 205)*

The following points with regard to the TAM categories of Eastern Bengali emerge from the study of Grierson (1903):

(i) The present is unmarked as illustrated in (19). The verbs *khaain* 'eat' and *falaain* 'throw-away' marked by zero suffix in example (19), in fact have a present habitual reading. Grierson does not mention anything about present habitual.

(19) aamaa-r baap-ar darmaa-khaaoraa koto saakare koto **khaa-in**
ISg-Gen father-Gen wages-eating how-many servants how much eat-III-Hon

aar koto **falaa-in** aar aami buke mor-i
and how-much throw-away-III-Hon and ISg hunger die-I
My father's servants eat so much and waste so much. And I die of hunger.
(Grierson 1903. V. I: 236)

The form *te-s* and *r* are used with the periphrastic present in Sylhet and Cachar district. These forms *te-s* and *r* have a present progressive reading as in (20)-(21).

(20) jaaitesi 'going' (Grierson 1903. V. I: 226)

(21) jaaiyaar ‘going’ (Grierson 1903. V. I: 226)

(ii) The past is denoted by the suffix *l* affixed to the verb stem, as in (22)-(23).

(22) taar maaze suṭa-ṭaa-i baap-re **kai-l-a**
of-them among younger-Cl-Nom father-Dat say-Pst-III
Among them, the younger one said to the father. (Grierson 1903.V. I: 235)

(23) teu uṭhe he taa-r baap-ar gese **ge-l-o**
then rising IIISg-Masc IIISg-Masc-Gen father-Gen near go-Pst-III
Then he stood up and went to his father. (Grierson 1903. V. I: 236)

(iii) The *s* in the verbs *aaisoin* ‘has come’ and *disoin* ‘has given’ in (24) functions as a perfect marker.

(24) saakar taa-re kai-l-a, tumaa-r bhaai **aai-s-o-in**
servant IIISg-Masc-Dat say-Pst-III, IISg-Gen brother come-Perf-III-Hon,

aar tumaa-r baap-e aak khaani **di-s-o-in**
and IISg-Gen father-Nom one feast give-Perf-III-Hon
The servant said to him, your brother has come and your father has given a feast.
(Grierson1903.V. I: 236-237)

However, *s* in (25) connotes past tense.

(25) taar-pare aami baari khaai-yaa **pari-ge-s-i-gi-yaa**
thereafter ISg blow eat-Pcpl fall-down-Pst-I-go-Pcpl

aamaa-re bejaan laaṭhi diyaa piṭhi-r maaje **maar-s-e**
ISg-Acc soundly stick by back-Gen on beat-Pst-III
Thereafter I fell down having being hit. He hit me with a stick on my back.
(Grierson 1903. V. I: 232)

(iv) The co-occurrence of *s* and *l* in the sequence *s-i-l* as in (26) functions as pluperfect.

(26) aar aamoraa kheye aamud kor-i;
and IPl eat rejoice do-I

kenanaa aamaa-r ei puaa mori **ge-s-i-l**,
because ISg-Gen this son die go-Perf-i-Pst
And let us rejoice because my son had died. (Grierson 1903. V. I: 236)

(v) The past habitual is denoted by suffixing *t* to the verb stem, as in *khaaito* 'used to eat' in example (27).

(27) hikhaano huo-re ze tuš **khaai-t-o**
there swine-Dat what husks eat-Pst Hab-III
There swine used to eat much more husks. (Grierson 1903. V. I: 235)

(vi) The future is formed by attaching *m* to the verb stem with first person subject as shown in (28). With second person and third person, *b* is attached to the verb stem as in (29i, ii). The future is also indicated by inflecting the verb with *t* as shown in (30i, ii, iii).

(28) aami uṭhe baabaa-r gese gi-yaa **kai-m-u**
ISg rising father-Gen near go-Pcpl say-Fut-I
I will go and tell my father. (Grierson 1903. V. I: 236)

(29 i) tumi **dekh-b-aay**
IISg see-Fut-II
You will see. (Grierson 1903. V. I: 225)

(29 ii) he **dekh-b-o**
IIISg-Masc see-Fut-III
He will see (Grierson 1903. V. I: 225)

(30i) **dekh-t-aam**
see-Fut-I
(I) will see (Grierson 1903. V.I: 226)

(30 ii) **dekh-t-aay**
see- Fut-II
(You) will see. (Grierson 1903. V.I: 226)

(30 iii) **dekh-t-o**
see-Fut-IIISg
(He/She) will see (Grierson 1903. V. I: 226)

### 2.3.5 TAM in Bengali spoken in Hailakandi (HB)

HB deserves a special discussion because it is this Bengali that Bishnupriyas speak. A discussion on the TAM categories and forms in HB is based on the corpus of natural data collected from Bengali speakers in Hailakandi.

| **Tense and Aspect** | HB | Eastern Bengali (Grierson1903) | Eastern Bengali (Chatterjee 1926) | Standard Bengali (Chatterjee 1926) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Tense*** | | | | |
| *Past* | *l ~ s* | *l* | *l* | *l* |
| *Present* | - | *Ø* | *Ø* | *Ø* |
| *Future*[14] | *t ~ m ~ b* | *t ~ m ~ b* | *t* | *b* |
| ***Aspect*** | | | | |
| *Present Progressive* | *r* | *r ~ te-s* | *r ~ te-aach* | *te-ch ~ ch ~cch* |
| *Past Progressive* | *r ~ aat-aas-l* | - | *te-aach-il* | *te-ch-il ~ cch-il* |
| *Future Progressive* | *aat-thaak-b/m* | - | *te-thaak-b* | *te-thaak-b* |
| *Perfect* | - | *s* | *s* | *ch* |
| *Past Perfect* | *sl* | *sl* | *sl* | *ch-l* |
| *Habitual* | *Ø* | - | - | - |
| *Past Habitual* | *t* | *t* | *t* | *t* |

*Table 2.2 Tense and Aspect markers in HB, Eastern Bengali and Standard Bengali*

- In a column indicates not attested.

Table 2.2 shows correspondences between the TAM markers of HB (present study) and the TAM markers used in Eastern Bengali and Standard Bengali as attested in Grierson (1903) and Chatterjee (1926). The importance of Standard Bengali in Hailakandi lies in the fact that it is the official language and language of education in Hailakandi. The TAM markers in HB are similar to the TAM forms attested in earlier studies on Eastern Bengali. Nevertheless, a slight difference can be observed. For instance, *s* which has been attested as perfect marker has the functional properties of a past marker in HB. In eastern Bengali (Grierson 1903, Chatterjee 1926) there are two forms *te-s* and *r* for encoding present progressive meanings, whereas in the present study only the form *r* has been found.

#### 2.3.5.1 Tense in HB

##### 2.3.5.1.1 Past Tense in HB

The past tense in HB is designated by *l*, s. The past marker *s* alternates with *l* in situations located in the distant past, as in (31)-(34), in recent past, as in (35)-(38), and immediate or hodiernal past, as in (39)-(42).[15] Thus we can see that *l* and *s* denote general past contexts and do not specify remoteness distinctions in HB.

**Distant Past**

(31) aami siaattar iŋraaji-th mæṭrik faaš- **kor-s-i**
ISg 1976 year-in Matric pass- do-Pst-I
I passed the Matric examination in 1976. (Dadu)

(32) horu takte maa-r loge aami i-taa jaagaa-th bejaan **ge-s-i**
small when mother-Gen with ISg Det-Cl place-Loc much go-Pst-I
I went to these places many times with my mother when I was small. (Dida)

(33) fošoṭṭi-th taa-in baarišṭaari **faaš- kor-l-aa**
sixty-five-in IIISg-Masc-Hon barrister pass - do-Pst-III
He passed bar-at-law in 1965. (Aman)

(34) he ta fosaaši-r plein kraaš-o **maaraa-ge-l-o**
IIISg-Masc Emph eighty-five-Gen plane crash-in die-go-Pst-III
He died in a plane crash in 1985. (Badal)

**Recent Past**

(35) faas maaš aage aami i gaf **hun-c-i**[16]
five month before ISg Det story hear-Pst-I
I heard this story (news) five months back. (Naved)

(36) taa-re baašaa-th **ni-s-o-in** foršu
IIISg-Masc-Dat home-Loc take-Pst-III-Hon day-before-yesterday
They took him home day before yesterday. (Reena)

(37) Roni-e ta **biyaa-kor-l-o** koek maaš aage
Roni-Nom Emph marriage-do-Pst-III some months before
Rone married a few months back. (Bhai)

(38) goto foršudin taain **ni-l-aa** aamaa-r kaagaj…
last day-before-yesterday IIISg-Masc-Hon take-Pst-III ISg-Gen paper
He took my papers day-before-yesterday… (Rabi)

**Immediate Past**

(39) i baari-r bou aaij din-o **aai-s-o-in**
Det house-Gen daughter-in-law today afternoon-in come-Pst-III-Hon
The daughter-in-law of this house came in the afternoon. (Dida)

(40) Daaraa-r hour **maaraa-ge-s-o-in**
Dara-Gen father-in-law die-go-Pst-III-Hon
Dara's father-in-law died (just now). (Reena)

(41) aami šokaale ono tai-yaa **baaroi-l-aam**
ISg morning here keep-Pcpl go-out-Pst-I
I went out in the morning keeping (it) here. (Aman)

(42) ou **dek-l-aam** taai-re ono
now see-Pst-I IIISg-Fem-Dat here
I saw her here just now. (Moni)

The temporal adverbs, discourse contexts and background information gathered through interviews specify the exact time reference in the past. The affix *l* and *s* do not distinguish between dynamic verbs and stative marks, as is evident in (31)-(42). In literature on Eastern Bengali (Chatterjee 1926, Grierson 1903) *s* has been interpreted as a perfect marker. The affix *s* alternates with *l* in all past contexts in HB, and does not perform the functions of perfect in HB in the corpus used in this study.

### 2. 3.5.1.2 The affix *sl*

The affixes *s* and *l* co-occur in HB in the sequence *s* preceding *l* without any intervening vowel.[17] The sequence *s-l* has been attested as past perfect in studies on Bengali (Grierson 1903, Chatterjee 1926, Dasgupta 2003). By definition past perfect (pluperfect) ensures that the situation refers to remote past (Dahl 1985). The sequence *sl* in HB connotes past perfect meaning as in (43)-(44).

(43) i-jaagaa aamaa-r baabaa-y praay doš basar aage **kin-s-l-aa**
Det-land ISg-Gem father-Nom almost ten year before buy-Perf-Pst-III
My father had bought this land almost ten years back. (Bhai)

(44) aamaa-r baabaa **ge-s-l-aa** Daakaa-th ou basar
ISg-Gen father go-Perf-Pst-III Dhaka-Loc Det year.
My father had gone to Dhaka that year (1971). (Aman)

### 2.3.5.1.3 Use of Present in Past

The use of present progressive marker *r* in past is observed in HB. Chatterjee (1926) also notes the use of present in past contexts in historic narratives. In HB, the speakers move to the present and use *r* in discourse chunks usually when reproducing texts as

exemplified in (45)-(46). In (45) Bhai, the speaker is referring to an event that took place in the past (two months back). Similarly, the event in (46) is also located in the past.

(45) ek-din ta aami on taaki **jaai-yaa-r** .. baari-th taaki
one-day Emph ISg here from go-I-Pres Prog home-Loc from
One day I am/was going from here.. from home.

aar o-gu obaay taaki **aa-r-i**
and Det-Cl there from come- Pres Prog-III
And she is/was coming from that side. (Bhai)

(46) aami ta ufre taaki šob goṭonaa **deki-yaa-r**
ISg Emph up from all incident watch-I-Prog
I am/was watching everything from (the) roof-top. (Badal)

### 2.3.5.2 Aspect in HB

The following sections deal with the imperfective category of aspect in HB. The imperfective categories are realized in HB with the use of various affixes.

#### 2.3.5.2.1 Present Progressive in HB

The present progressive meaning in HB is denoted by *r* as we can see in (47)-(50). The present progressive forms such as, *te-s* and *te-aach*, which had been reported in earlier texts (Grierson 1903, Chatterjee 1926) are not attested in my data.

(47) mestair-e kaam **kor-t*ə*-r-aa** gar-o
carpenter-Nom work do-Cl-Pres Prog-III house-Loc
The carpenters are working at (my) house. (at the moment) (Reena)

(48) Minaa-y ekon faakgar-o maas **baanaa-r-i**
Mina-Nom now kitchen-Loc fish cut-Pres Prog-III
Mina is cutting fish in the kitchen now. (Moni)

(49) aaij aamaa-r beši **monofor-e-r** maa-r kothaa
today ISg-Gen much remember-e-Pres Prog mother-Gen words
Today I am remembering (my) mother a lot. (Dida)

(50) hun-o šaril-o bal aase **budfaa-r-aay** naa
listen-II body-Loc energy Be understand-Pres Prog-II Neg
Listen, you have energy so you are not understanding.
Listen, you have energy so you are not able to understand.[18] (Dadu)

The progressive situation marked by affix *r* occurring with an adverbial of continuation (given in italics) can provide a continuative meaning in HB as shown in (51). Unlike English, example (51) does not provide a habitual reading.

(51) ou *onoborotho* rait-e- din-e boroi **kaai-r-aa**
DM continuously day-in- night-in berry eat-Pres Prog -III
They are eating berries day and night. (Rabi)

#### 2.3.5.2.2 Past Progressive in HB

In HB, the past progressive is formed by affixing the participle form *aat* to the main verb plus the verb 'Be' inflected with past marker *l* as shown in (I). The following examples (52)-(53) clearly illustrate this.

(I) **[V-aat-aas-l]**

(52) tumi jokon fon kor-š-l-aay aami **raand-aat-aas-l-aam**
IISg when phone do-Perf-Pst-II ISg cook-Pcpl- Be-Pst-I
I was cooking when you had called. (Reena)

(53) hun-c-i naa tumaa-r daak aami TV **saau-aat- aas-l-aam**
hear-Pst-I Neg IISg-Gen call ISg TV watch-Pcpl-Be-Pst-I
I did not hear your call (as) I was watching TV. (Moni)

#### 2.3.5.2.3 Future Progressive in HB

In HB, the progressive situation located in future is marked by participle form *aat* attached to the main verb in conjunction with *thaak* plus the future affix [m ~ b] as in (54i, ii).

(54i) kaail i- šomoy aamraa baas-o **jaau-aat- thaak-m-u**
tomorrow Det- time IPl bus-Loc go-Pcpl- stay-Fut-I
Tomorrow at this time, we will be going by bus. (Bhai)

(54ii) tumi outaa **kor-aat-thaak-b-aay**…
IISg Det-Cl do-Pcpl-stay-Fut-II
You will be doing all these… (Reena)

#### 2.3.5.2.4 Habitual in HB

The habitual situations in HB are unmarked as shown in (55)-(57). Like many other languages of the world, HB does not distinguish between habitual and present tense (See Comrie 1985). Both habitual and present tense are unmarked. In other words, habitual situations take a zero affix.

(55) bule maa-re **daak-e-Ø** ammi
say-Quot mother-Dat call-III-Hab Ammi

aar i-gu-re **daak-e-Ø** mummy
and Det-Cl-Dat call-III-Hab Mummy
It seems she calls her mother Ammi and calls this one Mummy. (Reena)

(56) aamaa-r gar-o hurutaa-y kub **kaa-in- Ø** Mægi
ISg-Gen house-Loc children-Nom much eat-III - Hab Maggi
The children in my house eat Maggi (noodles) a lot. (Naved)

(57) fottek din biyaan-e **jaa-y-Ø** biyaal-e **aaiy-oy -Ø** taai
every day morning-in go-III-Hab evening-in come-III-Hab IIISg-Fem
Every-day she goes in the morning and comes back in the evening. (Aman)

#### 2.3.5.2.5 Past Habitual in HB

However, the habitual located in the past is marked by *t* in HB, as in (58)-(60).

(58) aamaa-r kaali haaDi-th jaeṇ̣-a biš **kor-t-o**
ISg-Gen only bone-in joint-in pain do-Pst Hab-III

thuraa thuraa **fuli-jaai-t-o**
little little swell-go-Pst Hab-III
My bones and joints used to pain, it used to swell a little. (Five years back)
(Moni)

(59) hi-hero taai kaali **baagi- jaai-t-o**
Det-time IIISg-Fem only run away -go-Pst Hab-III
Those days she used to run away always. (Dida)

(60) etu kaali nijar laagi **raandi-t-o**
At that time only self-Gen for cook-Pst Hab-III
At that time (she) used to cook for herself only. (Five years back) (Rabi)

#### 2.3.5.3 Mood in HB

Mood in HB is expressed only in the irrealis categories. The irrealis categories in HB include future situations, conditionals, counterfactuals and imperatives as in table 2.3.

| **Irrealis** | **Forms** |
|---|---|
| *Future* | *t ~ b ~m* |
| *Conditional* | *t ~ b ~ m* |
| *Counterfactual* | *l ~ t* |
| *Imperative* | *Ø* |

*Table 2.3 Irrealis categories and forms in HB*

#### 2.3.5.3.1 Future in HB

The future situations both "potential" and "certain" are indicated by *t, b* and *m* as illustrated in (61)-(68). These three forms are attested in Grierson (1903) as well. Chatterjee (1926) demonstrates the use of *t* in Eastern Bengali. The future markers in HB do not distinguish between the remote future and near future events. There is also no distinction between certain and probable events. However, a majority of the certain future situations in my data refer to events located in immediate or near future.

(61) aami aar ekon ekjaraa u **daraai-t-aam** naa
ISg and now a little also fear-Irr-I Neg
Now I will not fear even a little. (Naved)

(62) šaill-o dar-le **fudfaai-b-aay**
body-Loc catch-when understand-Irr-II
You will understand when your health will be affected. (Reenu)

(63) tumi koros **kor-b-aay** aaraa taaraa **mauj- kor-b-aa**
IISg spend do-Irr-II and IIIPl enjoy- do-Irr-III
You will spend and they will enjoy. (Rabi)

(64) kun-din **mor-m-u** ke jaan-e?
which-day die-Irr-I who know-III
Who knows when will I die? (Nana)

(65) taa-in **jaai-t-aa** Maaṭijuri-th
IIISg -Hon go-Irr-III Matijuri-Loc
He will go to Matijuri. (Moni)

(66) aami **jaai-m-u** šokaal-e
ISg go-Irr-I morning-in
I will go in the morning. (Nana)

(67) maamaa-y aamaa-re kaail **jaanaai-b-aa** koi-s-o-in
Uncle-Nom ISg-Dat tomorrow inform-Irr-III say-Pst-III-Hon
(My) uncle said that he will inform me tomorrow. (Aman)

(68) hi beṭa Arun-ar maa-r loge **aai-b-aa**
Det man Arun-Gen mother-Gen with come-Irr-III
That man will come with Arun's mother. (Dida)

#### 2.3.5.3.2 Conditional in HB

In if-then constructions, the conditional clause is marked by *le* or *jodi* and the consequent clause receives the future marking as illustrated in (69)-(71).

(69) meg **di-le** aami **aai-t-aam** naa
rain give-If ISg come-Irr-I Neg
If it rains then I will not come. (Reena)

(70) loun **faai-le** bisnes ṣtaarṭ **di-m-u**
loan get-If business start give-Irr-I
If I get a loan, then I will start business. (Badal)

(71) tumi **jodi** regulaar betan deu,
IISg if regular salary give

teu taaraa tumaa-r kaam **kor-b-aa**
then IIIPl IISg-Gen work do-Irr-III
If you pay them regularly, then they will do your work. (Sheema)

#### 2.3.5.3.3 Counterfactual in HB

There are two ways of conveying counterfactual meaning in HB. The consequent clauses marked by past marker *l* provides counterfactual meaning, as in (72)-(73). The irrealis marker *t* also evinces counterfactual meaning, as in (74).

(72) i-taa durniti jaan-le ilekšon-o **daraai-l-aam** naa oy
Det-Cl corruption know-If election-in stand-Pst-I Neg Be
If I had known about the corruption, I would not have contested in election.
(Naved)

(73) taaraa-re baalaa kor-i daawaat di-le taaraa šob **aai-l-aa** oy
IIIPl-Dat good do-Pcpl invite give-If IIIPl all come-Pst-III Be
Had they been invited properly, they would have come. (Sheema)

(74) faaš **kor-t-o** **faar-t-o** jodi thuraa cešṭaa **kor-t-o**
pass do-Irr-III can-Irr-III If little try do-Irr-III
He could have passed if he had tried a bit. (Nana)

#### 2.3.5.3.4 Imperative in HB

The imperative constructions in HB vary depending on the relationship with the addressee on which the command is imposed. The imperatives are denoted in various ways in HB:

(i) the verb stem is affixed with either zero or *is* when the addressee is an inferior or a familiar person as in (75)-(76),
(ii) the verb stem is affixed with person marker when the addressee is neither inferior nor older to the addressor as in (77),
(iii) honorific marker *in* is used when the addressee is older or respected as seen in (78).

The prohibitive is formed by adding a negative particle with the imperative constructions marked with the relevant person marker. In a hortative construction, on a third person addressee, the affix *k* is used with inferiors, otherwise *kaa* is used.[19] This is illustrated in (79)-(80). Thus we have seen that imperatives in HB do not employ any overt TAM markers. Chatterjee (1926: 979) regards *is* as contemptuous as it is used with second person singular pronouns such as *tui*, *toraa*, which are considered as inferior or contemptuous. He also states that in New Bengali *is* may be used with the past of *aach* as in *chilis* 'thou are', in past progressive and perfect tenses as in *jaacchilis* 'thou wert going', *giyechilis* 'thou hadst gone'.[20] The use of affix *k* for third person imperative has been attested in Chatterjee (1926: 990).

(75) **bo-Ø** ono
sit-Imp here
Sit here! (Badal)

(76) kaail jaldi **aa-is**
tomorrow quickly come-Imp
Come early tomorrow! (Dida)

(77) **jaa-u** in takiyaa
go-II here from
Go from here! (Nana)

(78) **jaa-in** bitre
go-Hon inside
Go inside! (Aman)

(79) foylaa faišaa **deu-k**
first money give-Hor
Let him give the money first! (Dadu)

(80) **kau-kaa** habuitaa
eat-Hor everything
Let them eat everything! (Rabi)

### 2.4 TAM in Bishnupriya (BP)

Now we turn to a discussion on the TAM system in BP. In the backdrop of the above discussion, I provide a description of the T, A, M categories and forms that are used to denote these categories in BP as demonstrated in the total linguistic repertoire of the Bishnupriya speech community. In discussing the T, A, M categories, I have drawn on the terminologies and definitions used in traditional literature such as Comrie (1976, 1985), Dahl (1985), Bybee et al. (1994) and others.

Though BP is an outcome of contact between varieties of Tibeto-Burman (isolating) and Indo-Aryan (inflectional) languages, BP is a highly inflectional language.

The T, A, M categories in BP are expressed by verbs and/or auxiliaries marked by various inflectional suffixes. In addition to inflectional suffixes and temporal adverbs, continuous discourse contexts play a vital role in anchoring the temporal reference. The inventory of the TAM categories and the forms that express them as shown in table 2.4 indicate that the affixes [l, s, sl, r, Ø, t, ŋ, b, m, te-s] encode the TAM functions in BP.

| **BP** | |
|---|---|
| **TAM Categories** | **Forms** |
| ***Tense*** | |
| *Past Tense* | *l ~ s ~ sl* |
| ***Aspect*** | |
| *Habitual (Present)* | *l ~ s ~ r ~ Ø* |
| *Past Habitual* | *l ~ s ~ r ~ t* |
| *Present Progressive* | *r ~ s ~ te-s* |
| *Past Progressive* | *r* |
| ***Mood*** | |
| *Irrealis (Future)* | *t ~ ŋ ~ m ~ b* |
| *Conditional* | *t ~ ŋ* |
| *Counterfactual* | *l-s ~ t* |
| *Imperative* | *Ø* |

*Table 2.4 TAM forms in BP*

Table 2.4 indicates that there is internal variability both within and across TAM categories in BP. Multiple forms perform the same function and on the other hand, a single affix performs multiple functions. The person marking in BP displays lot of variability (See Laskar 2008a). Each grammatical person can be indicated by different

person markers. The sequence or ordering of the TAM marking and the person/number inflection with regard to the verb will not be discussed in this study.[21] In the following sections, I will discuss the use and functions of various markers across the TAM categories. This would also help us in determining the nature of variation that exists within the TAM categories in BP.

The TAM marking in verb 'Be' is not considered in this study as there were very few instances of 'Be' in the data.[22] However, 'Be' when it occurs as the second element in complex verb is included for analysis (See Laskar 2003a).

### 2.4.1 Tense in BP

The tense system in BP serves to locate a situation in a linear sequence in a discourse. Since a discourse framework is followed in this study, the reference point may vary according to the discourse sequences. The reference point has to be inferred from the discourse sequences depending on the type of narrative and the speech acts a speaker engages in.

#### 2.4.1.1 Past Tense in BP

The past tense in BP includes all events, actions or states, which had begun prior to a given reference time. It only locates the situation as beginning before the reference time and does not provide any information regarding the termination or continuity of the situation. The past tense is indicated by *l* as in (81)-(83), *s* as shown in (84)-(86), and *sl* as in (87)-(88).[23]

**Verb - l [Verb-Past Tense]**

(81) buraa-goi baabaa-re šomji-yaa buraa-goi **mor-i-l**
old-man-Cl father-Dat leave-Pcpl old-man-Cl die-i-Pst
Grandpa died leaving (all) the responsibilities to Papa. (Milan)

(82) pisede mi gi-iyaa caakori bisaar-aani šiloŋ-e **ge-l-u-gaa**
later ISg go-Pcpl job search-Inf Shillong-Loc go-Pst-I-Cl
Later I went to Shillong looking for a job. (Chandra)

(83) aak-din čul kaap-aani-r-kaa paišaa u **di-l-o**
one-day hair cut- Inf- Gen-Dat money also give-Pst-III
One day he gave me money for cutting (my) hair. (Virmani)

**Verb - s [Verb-Past Tense]**

(84) taa Karimganj kɔlej-e **paa- kor-e-s-e**[24]
IIISg-Masc Karimganj College-Loc read- do-e-Pst-III
He studied in Karimganj College. (Chandra)

(85) Nabaddip e- haan-ar naaŋ hoŋ kor-e **di-s-e**
Nabwadip Det-Cl-Gen name make do-Pcpl give-Pst-III
He gave the name Nabwadip. (Padma)

(86) churidaar-ṭuridaar haabi bel-iyaa **ge-s-u-gaa**
dress and like all leave-Pcpl go-Pst-I-Cl
I went leaving all my dresses. (Babli)

**Verb - s - l [Verb-Pst-Pst]**

(87) raaslilaa-y mi dikhrum **naas-e-s-i-l-u**
Rasa-lila-Loc ISg twice dance- e-Pst-i-Pst-I
I danced in *Rasa lila* twice. (Shefali)

(88) aami piknik-e **ge-s-i-l-aaŋ,**
IPl picnic-Loc go-Pst-i-Pst-I
We went to picnic,

ubaakaa nun naa ni-yaa **ge-s-i-l-aaŋ**
that time salt Neg take-Pcpl go-Pst-i-Pst-I
At that time we went without taking salt. (Bojendra)

#### 2.4.1.1.1 Degree of Remoteness

I provide a discussion on the remoteness distinctions based on the categories used in existing literature (Dahl 1985, Bybee et al. 1994) to explore whether the past tense markers [l ~ s ~ sl] characterize remoteness distinctions in the past tense category in BP.

**(a) Remote Past**

The remote past situations include all the situations that occurred long ago in the distant past and are very remote from the reference point. The remote past situations are indicated by [l ~ s ~ sl] as demonstrated in (89)-(96). The distant past references in these examples (89)-(96) marked by [l ~ s ~ sl] are indicated by the past temporal adverbs. However, in the absence of any temporal adverbs, the distant reference is inferred from the discourse cues and other extra-linguistic factors. For instance, in examples (93) and (94), I was able to determine the temporal reference of the situations from the content of the discourse and the age of the speakers.

(89) aami te forṭi sevɛn naa kitaa-th sevɛn naa eiṭ-e **paa- kor-l-aaŋ**
ISg Emph forty-seven or when-Loc seven or eight-Loc read- do-Pst-I
In 1947 I studied in class seven or eight. (Namita)

(90) taar pisede 1970-th mi eo-t šiloŋ-e **ge-l-u-gaa** aarki
That later 1970-in ISg there-Loc Shillong-Loc go-Pst-I-Cl DM
After that in 1970 I went to Shillong. Okay. (Bojendra)

(91) mo-r deharak- u-go naain-e taai-te mi **aai-l-u**
ISg-Gen brother-in-law-Det-Cl nine-Loc stay-when ISg come-Pst-I
I came when my younger brother-in-law was in class nine. (Janki)

(92) aaṭaaro basar.. haabbiu khulli sau-go-r jonmo-r pore **aah-e-s-u**
eighteen year all younger child-Cl-Gen birth-Gen after come-e-Pst-I
It has been eighteen years.. I came here after the birth of my youngest child.
(Janki)

(93) aami šaatro- jiban-e aami jetaa hin pei-yaa **taam- kor-e-s-i** u-taa
IPl student-life-Loc IPl much suffer get-Pcpl read - do-e-Pst-I Det-Cl
We studied amidst lot of hardships in our student life. (Satyendra)

(94) siks-e deh-iyaa **hobaa- paa-s-e**
six-Loc see-Pcpl good- get-Pst-III
(He) saw her in class six and fell in love with her. (Babli)

(95) hukaaŋ taai-te **hun-e-s-i-l-u- taa** yaari
small stay-when hear-e-Pst-i-Pst-I-Cl story
I heard (this) story when I was small. (Renu)

(96) oubaakaa taanu ilekšon- e **ubaa-s-i-l**
that time III election-Loc stand-Pst-i-Pst
He stood in election at that time. (Bojendra)

**(b) Recent Past**

The category "recent past" includes a broad time span, which covers the time period between the distant past and before the "day" of the reference time. The situations located in the recent past period are marked by *l* or *s*, as illustrated in (97)-(104). The temporal adverbs *ebaakaa* 'recently', *kaali* 'yesterday', *upeit* 'at that time' in examples (97)-(101) suggest that the actions the speaker is referring to happened recently.[25] But the recent temporal reference of the situations in (102)-(104) is determined by discourse factors.

(97) ebaakaa .. baašaa-haan daabi **kor-l-aaŋ**
recently language-Cl demand do-Pst-I
We made a demand for the recognition of our language recently. (Deven)

(98) kaali baaton **di-l-aa** bujan-ar baaton
yesterday invitation give-Pst-III feast-Gen invitation
They invited me to a feast yesterday. (Arun)

(99) upeit mi buṭ naa **di-s-u**
then ISg vote Neg give-Pst-I
I did not cast my vote at that time (a few days back). (Namita)

(100) dui tin maaš oi-l **aarombo -kor-e-s-e**
two three months Be-Pst start- do-e-Pst-III
He started (it) two-three months back. (Suchitra)

(101) haante ebaakaa.. Naagpur-e **ge-s-e-gaa**
so recently.. Nagpur-Loc go-Pst-III-Cl
So he went to Nagpur recently. (Shekhar)

(102) jaare **nuaar-l-u** belaa-di-yaa **aai-l-u**
bear Neg-can-Pst-I leave-give-Pcpl come-Pst-I
I could not bear it, I left and came back (a few days back). (Arun)

(103) taa-r-aaŋ hadzak aan-aat bule **ge-l-u-gaa-taa**
IIISg-Masc-Gen-Dat medicine bring-Inf say-Quot go-Pst-I-Cl-Cl
I went to him to bring medicine (recently). (Lilavati)

(104) šaat-maaš taa-iyaa, belaa- di-yaa **aah-e-s-e**
seven-months stay-Pcpl leave -give-Pcpl come-e-Pst-III
Having stayed for seven months, he left (the job) and came back (a few days back). (Nany)

**(c) Immediate Past**

The immediate past includes the situations that occurred on the same day as the reference point. The affixes *l* and *s* indicate the immediate past situations also, as is evident in (105)-(111). The immediate past situations may include actions, events, or states that happened a few hours before the reference time, a little before the reference time, and even coincide with the reference point.

(105) ou-taa **raad-l-aaŋ** aaji
Det-Cl cook-Pst-I today
Today I cooked these. (Padma)

(106) ti jemon aaji **aai-l-e**
IISg the way today come-Pst-II
The way you came today. (Mama)

(107) haa de to-r loge ṭoṭor-te mo-r-taa hou-haan **hukei-l**
ok so IISg-Gen with speak-Inf ISg-Gen-Cl curry-Cl dry-Pst
Okay so while talking to you my curry dried up. (Janki)

(108) "šunaa, didi aa-go **aah-e-s-e**"
dear sister one-Cl come-e-Pst-III
"(My) dear, (see) sister came." (Preeti)

(109) mendi **laagaa-s-u**
mehendi put-Pst-I
(I) applied *mehendi*.[26] (Sonia)

(110) hou kaaŋ-haan-at daal-iyaa **aah-e-s-u-taa**
curry plate-Cl-Loc pour-Pcpl come-e-Pst-I-Cl
Having poured the curry in the plate, I came out (just now). (Janki)

Example (111) is taken from a narrative, where a speaker describes the sequence of activities that she performed that day since early morning till the termination of the actions that took place just before the reference point which is the speech event in this case.

(111) aaij-te briəšpatibaar biyaan-te uṭ-i gaali- ṭupi **daraai-l-aaŋ**
today-Emph Thursday morning-since wake-Pcpl utensil clean-Pst-I
Today is Thursday, so waking up in the morning, (I) cleaned the utensils.

haabi daarai-yaa
everything clean-Pcpl
Having cleaned everything,

hod oi-yaa gar-dwar haabi **lep-l-aaŋ**
finish Be-Pcpl house and like all rub-Pst-I
Having finished (all these), I rubbed the floors of the house.

lep-iyaa hod oi-yaa dau-r kaani-kiri **kor-l-aaŋ**
rub-Pcpl finish Be-Pcpl god-Gen food do-Pst-I
Having finished rubbing, I prepared God's food.

ebaakaa baat-e **homaai-l-aaŋ-gaa**
now rice-Loc enter- Pst-I- Cl
Now I entered the kitchen. (Namita)

The above discussion as summarized in (I) suggests that *l* and *s* do not distinguish the degree of remoteness in the past tense. These markers simply locate the situations in the past tense without specifying the temporal distances from the reference point. However, we have seen that *sl* indicates the situations in the remote past contexts only.

| **(I)** | **Form** | **Function** |
|---|---|---|
| | *l* | Remote Past, Recent Past, Immediate Past |
| | *s* | Remote Past, Recent Past, Immediate Past |
| | *sl* | Remote Past only |

The past tense marking in BP displays three-way variability as demonstrated in (II) or (III).

| **(II)** | | **Form** | **Example** | **Gloss** | **Function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (i) | V - T | ge-l-u | 'I went' | Past Tense |
| | (ii) | V - T | ge-s-u | 'I went' | Past Tense |
| | (iii) | V-T-T | ge-s-i-l-u | 'I went' | Remote Past |

| **(III)** | | **Form** | **Example** | **Gloss** | **Function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (i) | V - T | ge-l-u | 'I went' | Past Tense |
| | (ii) | V - Be (T) | ge-s-u | 'I went' | Past Tense |
| | (iii) | V-Be (T) - T | ge-s-i-l-u | 'I went' | Remote Past |

The verb is variably marked by past tense markers [l ~ s] or the verb is affixed with the cliticized form of the Verb 'Be' which is then marked by tense marker *l*. The marker *s* is etymologically derived from the verb 'Be' *aas* which through a process of cliticization has become a marker of temporality on verbs (Laskar 2008 a).[27]

In the earlier studies (Grierson 1903 and Sinha 1981) *s* has been interpreted as perfect marker. The events or states situated in immediate past contexts can have perfect reading as they have current relevance. Dahl and Velupillai (2005) report that forms used for recent past sometimes coincide with perfect. They however, argue that a form to be counted as perfect must not be equivalent to a general past tense. We have seen that in BP *l* alternates with *s* in the immediate situations with current relevance. However, as these two markers occur with verbs situated in all the past (distant and recent) situations without specifying any remoteness distinctions, they are treated as general past markers. The form *sl* is attested as a past perfect marker in Sinha (1981). Considering the fact, *sl* locates situations only in remote past contexts in this study, *sl* can be said to perform the function of past perfect in BP as noted by Sinha (1981).[28]

### 2.4.2 Aspect in BP

BP has only an imperfective aspect. Therefore, the discussion is limited to the imperfective category alone. An imperfective aspect refers to a situation that may be in progress at a particular reference point (past or present) or a habitual situation that is, viewed as characteristics of a period of time which includes the reference time (Bybee et al. 1994: 125). The imperfective in BP subsumes both the progressive and the habitual situation.

#### 2.4.2.1 Progressive in BP

The progressive situations in BP include the 'on-going' or 'continuous' activities happening at the reference time. The reference time may coincide with the speech event or may refer to a longer time period in the present or past.

#### 2.4.2.1.1 Present Progressive in BP

The present progressive situations are indicated by *r, s* and *te-s* as shown in (112)-(121). The progressive situation may coincide with the reference point as in (112)-(116) or may be a continuous process in the sense of durative activity as in (117)-(118). The progressive markers in BP occur with action verbs, statives and with verbs of perception like *hear* and *see*.

**Verb - r [Verb-Present Progressive]**

(112) kaam **kor-i-r-i-go** tei
work do-III-Pres Prog-i-Cl IIISg-Fem
She is working. (at the moment) (Indra)

(113) to-r banak-e dau-r yaari- **de-i-r-i**
IISg-Gen sister-Nom God-Gen story- give-III-Pres Prog-i
You sister is telling stories relating to God. (at the moment) (Konika)

(114) gaari-haan nuŋei naa **pei-yaa-r**, naau **laage-r**
body-Cl good Neg get-I-Pres Prog Neg feel-Pres Prog
I am not feeling well. (at the moment) (Urmila)

(115) mi to-r ṭaar ebaa **haar- paa-u-r-i**
ISg IISg-Gen language now understand-get-I-Pres Prog-i
I am understanding your language now. (at the moment)
I am able to understand your language now. (Virmani)

(116) mi te elaa-haan **hun-u-r-i**
ISg Emph song-Cl listen-I-Pres Prog-i
I am listening to a song. (at the moment) (Mohitush)

(117) mi epei saaksešən **nikaalaa-u-r-i**
ISg now succession take- out-I- Pres Prog-i
I am obtaining the succession certificate now.
I am trying to obtain the succession certificate. (Padma)

(118) e maṭṭik faainel **de-i-r-i**
Det Matric Final give-III-Pres Prog-i
(She) is taking Matric Final Exam. (Currently taking exams, some are over and some are scheduled to happen in the next few days). (Java)

**Verb - s**[29] **[Verb - Pres Prog]**

(119) o-taay raas e-haan **kor-e-s-i-go**
Det-Cl Rasa one-Cl do-e- Pres Prog-III-Cl
They are performing in a *Rasa lila*. (at the moment) (Vibha)

(120) to-r je phutiphaali **laagaa-s-ot**
IISg-Gen Rel clothes put-Pres Prog-II

ṭo-r ṭotar-aani kothaa-baartaay ti kriminaal-go oi nuwaar-o
IISg-Gen speak-Inf talk and like IISg criminal-Cl Be Neg-can-II
The clothes that you are wearing and the way you talk, you can't be a criminal. (at this moment). (Milan)

**Verb-te-s [Verb-Present Progressive]**

(121) aami nije taa-re **poraai-te-s-i**
ISg myself IIISg -Masc-Dat teach-Pcpl- Pres Prog-I
I am myself teaching him. (at the moment) (Renu)

**2.4.2.1.2 Past Progressive in BP**

The progressive situations expressed by *r* can have past reference also. The past reference is indicated by the temporal adverbs or through discourse cues. There is no separate marker for denoting the progressive situations located in the past. The temporal adverb in (122)-(123) renders the situations as past. In the absence of temporal adverbs, as in (124), discourse context plays a vital role in providing a past reference to the progressive situation. Note the past temporal adverb in the beginning of the narrative establishes the past temporal reference in (124). The stative predicates as in (125) and verb of perception

as in examples (126)-(127) located in the past are also marked by the progressive marker *r*.

**Verb - r [Verb-Past Progressive]**

(122) o..biyaa-r aagekaa-r din-o-haan piši jebaakaa baat **raad-i-r-i** ..
o..marriage-Gen earlier-Gen day-Det-Cl aunt when rice cook-III- Pst Prog-i
The day before the marriage when (my) aunt was cooking rice.. (Vikram)

(123) neræšon **baagaa-de-r** jebaakaa oubaakaa mi gi-yaa humaai-l-u
narration inform-give-Pst Prog when then ISg go-Pcpl enter-Pst-I
I entered (the class) when he was teaching narration. (Konika)

(124) mo-re ek-din **aaŋ-kor-e-r** aarki iskul-ette aai-te
ISg-Dat one-day ask-do-III-Pst Prog DM school-Abl come-Pcpl
One day while coming from school he was asking me, okay.

"Sefaali ti maasṭaar kitaa dor-e-s-ot"
Sefali IISg teacher what catch-e-Pst-II
"Sefali did you take tuitions?"

o-taa bul-iyaa **aaŋ- kor-e-r** buli
Det-Cl say-Pcpl ask-do-III-Pst Prog say-Quot
He was asking these.

taa mo-r piṭe-go **aah-e-r**
IIISg-Masc ISg -Gen back-Cl come-III-Pst Prog
He was coming behind me. (Shefali)

(125) aami te klaas siks-e naay mi kittaa u **haar- naa-paa-u-r-i**
ISg Emph class six-Loc okay ISg anything also understand-Neg- get-I-Pst Prog-i
I was in class six okay! I was not understanding anything.
I was in class six,okay! I was not able to understand anything. (Arun)

(126) **deh-u-r-i** didi-re moraa-go
see-I-Pst Prog-i sister-Dat dead-Cl

DeD-boDi-re ṭæksi e-haan kor-iyaa **aanit-r-aa**
dead-body-Dat taxi one-Cl do-Pcpl bring-Pst Prog-III
I was seeing, they were bringing the dead-body of (my) sister in a taxi. (Milan)

(127) aaktaau parikkaa **col-e-r** šomoy o-haan-or maaje..
suddenly exam run-III-Pst Prog time Det-Cl-Gen in
Suddenly when the examination was going on..

kaakaa u kuttei e-haan pindi kaali gaa-y ge-s-e-gaa iskul-e
uncle also dress one-Cl wearing bare body-in go -Pst-III-Cl school-Loc
Uncle went to school wearing a *kuttei* and in bare body.[30]

mi klaas-e mur-te **deh-u-r-i**
ISg class-Loc turn-Pcpl see-I-Pst Prog-i
I was seeing while turning in the class. (Palash)

The above discussion summarized in (IV) suggests that the present progressive situations display three patterns of marking in BP: (a) the verb is marked by the aspect (progressive) marker *r*, (b) the verb plus *s*, the cliticized form of 'Be' also connotes progressive meaning and (c) Verb in conjugation with participial form *te* plus the cliticized form of the verb 'Be'.

| **(IV)** | **Form** | **Example** | **Gloss** | **Function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | V - A | kor-u-r-i | 'I am doing' | Present Progressive |
| (ii) | V - Be(A) | kor-e-s-i | 'They are doing' | Present Progressive |
| (iii) | V-Pcpl (te)-Be (A) | kor-te-s-i | 'I am doing' | Present Progressive |

However, the progressive situations embedded in the past are categorically expressed by *r*. The past reference is anchored either by temporal adverbs or discourse cues. In BP, the statives are also marked for progressive (both present and past).

### 2.4.2.2 Habitual in BP

Habitual is as Comrie (1976: 27) defines "a situation which is characteristic of an extended period of time." The habitual in BP includes situations that encode regular feature of the period, customary practices, common usages, repeated activities (iterative), daily activities that are embedded in the present. The habitual category is denoted by [r, Ø, l, s] as is evident in (128)-(141). The frequency adverbs like *nikkaa* 'everday', *praay* 'often' confer iterative meaning to situations marked by *r* in examples (133)-(134).

**Verb - r [Verb - Habitual]**

(128) tei epei iŋliš iskul-e **baagaa- de-i-r-i**
IIISg-Fem now English School-Loc teach-give-III- Hab-i
At present she teaches/is teaching in an English school. (Namita)

(129) mo-r beyak- o-go rel-e **caakri-kor-e-r**
ISg-Gen brother -Det-Cl rail-Loc job-do-III- Hab
My brother works/is working in the Railways.

taa-r sau-o-taa **taai-taa-r-aa** mo-r loge
IIISg-Masc-Gen child-Det-Cl stay-Cl-Hab-III ISg-Gen with
His children stay with me. (Anu)

(130) baupaagli jiniš e-haan te aar kun-o-goi **maat-taa-r-aa** naališaag
Baupagli thing Det-Cl so and some-Det-Cl say-Cl-Hab-III Nalishag
Some people refer to *Baupagli* as *Nalishag*.[31]

aamaa-r totaa-th haabi šomoy-e baupaagli **maati-aa-r**
IPl-Gen tongue-Loc all time-in Baupagli say-I- Hab
We always call it *Baupagli* in our language. (Janki)

(131) aamaa-r-taa te jeṭaa- beyak- are daadaa **bul-taa-r-aa** naay
IPl-Gen-Cl Emph elder-brother-Dat Dada call-Cl- Hab-III okay
Many of us address the elder brother as Dada okay.

aami daadaa naa **bul-iaa-r** yaamu **bul-iaa-r**
IPl Dada Neg call-I-Hab Yamu call- I- Hab
We do not call Dada, we call Yamu. (Gauri)

(132) aami iralpaa kaacaa moksi diyaa **kei-aa-r**
IPl iralpa raw pepper with eat- I- Hab
We eat *iralpa* with raw pepper.[32] (Arun)

(133) to-r u-go nikkaa aamaa-r gar-e aa-iyaa baath u **kaa-r-gaa**
IISg-Gen Det-Cl always IPl-Gen house-Loc come-Pcpl rice also eat- Hab-Cl
Your man comes and eats food in our house always. (Debobala)

(134) praay **aa-i-r-i** ,
often come-III-Hab-i
She comes often.

Haailaakaandi-th aai-le mo-r gar-e **aa-i-r-i**
Hailakandi-Loc come-when ISg-Gen house-Loc come-III-Hab-i
She comes to my house whenever she comes to Hailakandi. (Gita)

**Verb - Ø [Verb - Habitual]**

(135) hobba kor-e **bujaa-y- Ø** joto naa ose bujaa- de-r-i
good do-Pcpl explain-III-Hab till Neg Be explain- give-Hab -i
(He) explains nicely. (He) keeps on explaining till the time you understand.
(Dipu)

(136) ou-go-y nau **paa- kor-e-Ø**
Det-Cl-Nom Neg read- do-III-Hab
He does not study. (Palash)

**Verb - l [Verb - Habitual]**

(137) šaare tin-ṭaa-th uṭ-iyaa gonṭi-go ṭong ṭong kor-e baajai-taa-r-aa
half three-Cl-at wake-Pcpl bell-Cl tong tong do-Pcpl ring-Cl-Hab-III
They wake up at half-past three and ring the bell.

baathrum-e **ge-l-aaŋ-gaa** hin-iyaa - ṭiniyaa **aai-l-aaŋ**
bathroom-Loc go-Hab-I-Cl bath-Pcpl and like come- Hab-I
We go to the bathroom, take bath and come back.

aa-iyaa Dres **kor-l-aaŋ** piṭi
come-Pcpl dress do-Hab-I PT(physical training)
We come back and dress up for PT (Physical Training).

piṭi Dres **kor-l-aaŋ**, piṭi-th **ge-l-aaŋ-gaa**
PT dress do-Hab -I, PT-loc go-Hab-I-Cl
We wear PT uniforms, we go for the PT.

šaare šaat-ṭaa-th aa-iyaa brekfaasṭ **kor-l-aaŋ**
half seven-Cl-at come-Pcpl breakfast do-Hab-I
We come at half- past seven and have our breakfast.

brekfaasṭ **kor-l-aaŋ** erpise Dres **laagaai-l-aaŋ**
breakfast do-Hab-I then dress put- Hab- I
We take our breakfast and then we put our uniform.

jaar jaari Duṭi
our own duty

Duṭi-th **ge-l-aaŋ-gaa** baas
duty-loc go- Hab-I-Cl DM
We go to our duty. That's it. (Suchitra)

(138) mi šaat-ṭaa-th uṭ-u-r-i aari
ISg seven-Cl-at wake-I- Hab-i DM
I wake up at seven okay

šaat-ṭaa-th uṭ-iyaa gi-yaa taa-re **uṭ-aai-l-u**
seven-Cl-at wake-Pcpl go-Pcpl IIISg-Masc-Dat wake-Caus- Hab-I
Having woke up at seven, I wake him up.

uṭaan e-haan baala kor-iyaa phur-aani laage-r haante…
porch Det-Cl good do-Pcpl sweep-Inf need-Hab as
I have to sweep the porch nicely so…

tei šaat-ṭaa-th **uṭ-i-l** mi u šaat-ṭaa-th **uṭ-l-u**
IIISg-Fem seven-Cl-at wake-i-Hab ISg also seven-Cl-at wake-Hab-I
She wakes up at seven, I also wake up at seven.

tei aamaa-r banak sau-o-go ..
IIISg-Fem IPl-Gen sister child-Det-Cl
She is our younger sister..

paas-ṭaa-r bitare uṭ-iyaa te čaa kaap kaani **di-l-o** haabbi-re
five-Cl-Gen within wake-Pcpl then tea cup little give-Hab-III all-Dat
(She) wakes up by five (and) then gives tea to all of us.

pisete jiŋaa-th paani **di-l- aaŋ-gaa**
later gourd-Loc water give-Hab-I-Cl
Later I give water in the vegetables. (Sunil)

(139) taar pore Krišnaa-goi taa-r joto
then Krishna-Cl IIISg-Masc-Gen whatever

baaillo hišṭri-haan aastaa-haan naay
childhood history-Cl whole-Cl okay

haabi Dæns- haan-lo elaa-haan-lo haabi **di-l-o**
all dance-Cl-Inst song-Cl-Inst all give-Hab-III
Then Krishna enacts his childhood life with songs and dances.

de-naa-r pore aamaa-r-taa Gopi **humaai-l-aa**
give-Inf-Gen later IPl-Gen-Cl Gopi enter-Hab-III
Having done that, our Gopis enter.

Gopi humai-iyaa u-taa **naas-l-aaŋ** haabbi-e
Gopi enter-Pcpl Det-cl dance-Hab-I all-Nom
We all dance with the Gopis.

aaksaaṭe haaru koti phurti aarki kor-iyaa **naas-l-aaŋ**
together happy how- much happiness DM do-Pcpl dance-Hab-I
We all dance together very happily okay. (Preeti)

**Verb - s [Verb- Habitual]**

(140) ebaa te buraa buri **cal-e-s-i** sau aag-go aase loge
now Emph old-man old-woman manage-e- Hab-i child one-Cl Be with
Now (we both) old man and woman are (somehow) managing. One child stays with us. (Lilavati)

(141) šabji kei-aa-r baaro maaŋšo te naau **kaa-s-i** naay
vegetable eat-I-Hab but meat Emph Neg eat-Hab-I okay
We eat vegetable but we do not eat meat okay. (Gauri)

**2.4.2.2.1 Past Habitual in BP**

In BP, the situations encoding habitual meaning that are embedded in the past are marked by *l, r, t, s*. Only *t* is attested as past habitual marker in earlier studies (Grierson 1903, Sinha 1981). The frequency adverbs such as *šabšomoy* 'always', *haadi* 'sometimes', *pratekk din* 'everyday', daily as in (142)-(146) connote a habitual meaning to situations marked by *l*. But in (147)-(149), the context provides habitual meaning.

(142) aami kitaay šabšomoy **mil-l-aaŋ**, **tei-l-aaŋ**
I Pl what always meet-Pst Hab-I stay-Pst Hab-I
We would meet always. (Milan)

(143) taanu haadi kitaay bədmaaši **kor-l-aa** kitaa **kor-l-aa**
III Pl sometimes what mischief do-Pst Hab-III what do-Pst Hab-III
Sometimes they would do bad things and what not. (Arun)

(144) u-goi baaro mo-re šabšomoy **šaašon-kor-l-o**,
Det-Cl also ISg-Acc always chide - do-Pst Hab-III
He would chide me always. (Mama)

(145) jiŋe nuaare-r haante pratekk-din **kilaai-l-o**.. klaas-e
defeat Neg-can-Pst Hab so every-day punch-Pst Hab-III class-Loc
He could not defeat me so everyday he used to beat (me) in the class. (Preeti)

(146) Deili jemon pušaak **laagaai-l-u**
daily like dress put-Pst Hab-I
Everyday I used to wear (new) dress…

sen- fen saaban hobaa jaatiya jiniš niyaam **bebahaar -kor-l-u**
perfume and like soap good type things much use- do-Pst Hab-I
I used to use perfumes, soap and other good things always. (Virmani)

(147) aage Maaṭijuri-th aaṭ-iyaa **ge-l-aaŋ-gaa**
earlier Matijuri-Loc walk-Pcpl go-Pst Hab-I-Cl
Earlier we used to go to Matijuri walking.

upeit Maaṭijuri-tta puri keyaa-lo **laaŋ- kor-l-aaŋ**
then Matijuri-Abl from boat-Inst cross- do-Pst Hab-I
Then from Matijuri we used to cross by boat.

keyaa-lo laaŋ kor-iyaa upeitapuri aa-iyaa .. rikšaa loi **aai-l-aaŋ**
boat-Inst cross do-Pcpl then come-Pcpl rickshaw take come-Pst Hab-I
Having crossed by boat, we used to come by rickshaw from there. (Lilavati)

(148) aamaa-r aagekaa-r maanu-e **kor-l-aa** heiciŋ
IPl-Gen earlier-Gen people-Nom do-Pst Hab-III heicing
Our fore-fathers used to do *heicing* (marriage ritual). (Anu)

(149) raati-haan taai-te uṭ-iyaa aami daan **baan-l-aaŋ**
night-Cl remain-while wake-Pcpl IPl rice grind-Pst Hab-I
We used to grind rice by waking up early in the morning. (Padma)

(150) aage te mukkiaar bule **maat-l-aa**
earlier Emph Mukkiar say-Quot call-Pst Hab-III
Earlier (everybody) used to call (him) Mukkiar. (Indra)

**Verb - r [Verb - Past Habitual]**

(151) gar-e aai-le buraa-baabaa-r loge **gunj-e-r-i-go**
house-Loc come-when old-father-Gen with sleep-I-Pst Hab-i-Cl
I would sleep with my grand-father whenever I went home. (Raju)

(152)i. sau koto-go **baagaa- de-r-i** aa-iyaa,
child some-Cl inform- give-Pst Hab-i come-Pcpl
She used to come and teach some children.

ii. ebaakaa-te nau aa-i-r-i,
now -Emph Neg come-III-Hab-i
Now she does not come.

iii. aage **aa-i-r-i**
earlier come-III-Pst Hab-i
Earlier she used to come. (Urmila)

The habitual marked by *r*, without any temporal adverb (with past reference) encodes a present reference. However, it is the context as in (151) and the temporal adverbs (past), which provide a past interpretation of the habitual in (152iii).

In BP, one also finds the use of affix *t* for indicating past habitual meaning as is illustrated in (153)-(156). This affix *t* is homophonous with the irrealis affix *t*. The temporal adverbs (with past reference) and discourse context help in eliciting the temporal and aspectual function of *t*, and thereby distinguishing it from the irrealis marker *t* (See Section 2.7.3). For instance, the interpretation of (153) as a future event will be anomalous as it has a temporal adverb *upeit* 'at that time', which is incompatible with the future. The discourse contexts in (154)-(156) help in interpreting the situations marked by *t* as habitual embedded in the past.

**Verb - t [Verb - Past Habitual]**

(153) upeit ou-haan kitaa **kor-t-aaŋ-gaay**…
that time Det-Cl what do-Pst Hab-I-Cl
At that time what I used to do….

iskul-etta šanibaar-ar din **aai-t-aaŋ** e-haan-lo
school-Abl Saturday-Gen day come-Pst Hab-I Det-Cl-with
I used to come from School on Saturday with this. (Sharat)

(154) te šombaar-ar din te kitaa **kor-t-aaŋ-gaay**
so Monday-Gen day so what do-Pst Hab-I-Cl
So what I used to do on Monday.

biyaan-ta uṭ-iyaa imaa-y baathguli **raadi-t-ay**
morning-since wake-Pcpl mother-Nom rice cook-Pst Hab-III
(My) mother used to wake up early in the morning and cook rice. (Satyendra)

(155) mi klaas-e 45 miniṭ mi ṭaanaa lekcaar e-haan naa **di-t-u**
ISg class-Nom 45 min ISg long lecture Det-Cl Neg give-Pst Hab-I
I used to never deliver a lecture for 45 min in the class. (Bojendra)

(156) aaksaaṭe præktis **kor-t-aaŋ**
together practice do-Pst Hab-I
We used to practice together. (Raju)

The past habitual category in BP is also designated by *s* as in (157)-(159). The presence of temporal adverb (suggesting frequency) *pratekk din* 'everyday' in (157) renders habitual meaning to the situation. But in (158)-(159), the content of the discourse indicate that the situations connote habitual meaning.

(157) pratekk din o-go-r **kil -kaa-s-i**
every day Det-Cl-Gen punch -eat-Pst Hab-I
I used to be beaten by him everyday. (Gauri)

(158) aamaa-r- taa-y biri- siri **kaa-s-i**
IPl-Gen-Cl-Nom biri and like eat-Pst Hab-III
Our people used to smoke biri. (Sandya)

(159) onek din aage taa aamaa-r ṭaar-e kabitaa **i-kor-e ge-s-e-gaa**
many days before IIISg-Mas IPl-Gen language-in poem compose-do-Pcpl go-Pst Hab-III-Cl
Earlier he used to compose poems in our language. (Anu)

Figure 2.1 suggests that the habitual (present) category is denoted by four variants [r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s]. The habitual meaning in BP is expressed in four ways: (a) the verb is marked by *r*, (b) the verb is unmarked (c) the verb is marked by *l* and (d) verb plus the cliticised form of 'Be' also connotes habitual meaning.

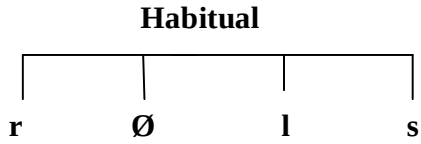



*Figure 2.1 Habitual variants in BP*

The past habitual meaning is assigned by four variants [l ~ r ~ t ~ s] as shown in figure 2.2. Figure 2.2 suggests that many of the habitual markers such as [r ~ l ~ s] can also be extended to past habitual contexts. The temporal adverbs (frequency and past) and the content of the discourses help in eliciting the habitual meaning and inferring the temporality in such cases.

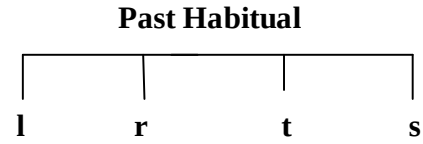



*Figure 2.2 Past Habitual variants in BP*

### 2.4.3 Mood (Irrealis) in BP

This section mainly concerns with the irrealis category. Despite the controversy revolved around the realis/irrealis category of mood (See Bybee et al. 1994), I still use irrealis category as an umbrella term for all unreal and hypothetical situations following the traditional creole literature (Bickerton 1975, 1981). The irrealis in BP encompasses the future events, unreal conditionals including counterfactuals and imperatives. The imperatives, conditionals and counterfactuals are subsumed under irrealis category in the existing literature. Table 2.5 shows that the forms *t, ŋ, b, m, l-s, Ø* designate the irrealis categories in BP. The affix *t* is used to express all irrealis meaning except imperatives. Unlike *t,* the other forms *ŋ, b, m* are not used to indicate irrealis categories such as unreal conditionals, counterfactuals and imperatives.

| **BP** | |
|---|---|
| **Irrealis** | **Forms** |
| *Future* | *t ~ ŋ ~ b ~ m* |
| *Conditional* | *t* |
| *Counterfactual* | *l-s ~ t* |
| *Imperative* | *Ø* |

*Table 2.5 Irrealis categories and forms in BP*

The status of "future" has been contentious and whether it should be treated as a tense or a mood category has been debated (See Fleischman 1982, Chung and Timberlake 1985, Dahl 1985). Though Chung and Timberlake (1985:243) consider the situations that are presumed to be certain to occur under the future tense category and those that are uncertain under the mood category, I have considered all future situations both certain and hypothetical under the irrealis mood category because any statement regarding future

event, however certain is a prediction and therefore remains unreal and hypothetical (cf. Fleischman 1982, Bybee et al. 1994).

#### 2.4.3.1 Future in BP

The future in BP encodes all situations that are hypothetical and are loaded with subjunctive nuances, and also events that the speaker considers as imminent or certain and may occur subsequent to the reference time. BP uses *t, ŋ, b, m* to mark the situations embedded in the future as is demonstrated in (160)-(173). The time adverbs in examples (163)-(164) help in rendering the time inference in the future.

**V- t [Verb- Future]**

(160) mo-r jilak-are mi naa **dek-t-au**
ISg-Gen daughter-Dat ISg Neg see-Irr-I
I will not see my daughter. (Babli)

(161) niŋal-o-taa biyaa **di-t-u-gaa**
daughter-Det-Cl marriage give-Irr-I-Cl
I will get (my) daughters married. (Debobala)

(162) taanu-r bopaak o-gu-e maat-i-r-i-taay "mi te nau **taai-t-au**
III-Gen father Det-Cl-Nom say-III-Pst Prog-i-Cl ISg Emph Neg stay-Irr-I
His father was saying, "I will not live.

te niŋal o-go-r biyaa-haan mi naau **dek-t-au**
so girl Det-Cl-Gen marriage-Cl ISg Neg see-Irr-I
So I will not see the marriage of this girl.

kintu mi mor-iyaa hod oi-le to-r daadu **mor-t-oi**"
but ISg die-Pcpl finish Be-when IISg-Gen grand-father die-Irr-III
But after I die, your grand-father will die." (Anu)

(163) ebaake mi šilchaar-e aas-u eboŋ dui-haazaar- šaat- engraazi-r..
now ISg Silchar-Loc Be-I and two-thousand-seven -year-Gen

ekthriš-e maarch mi saakori-tta **jiraai-t-u**
thirty-first-on March ISg job-Abl rest-Irr-I
At present I am in Silchar and on 31 March 2007.. I will retire from job.

orthaat **riṭaai*ə*r- kor-t-u** aari
meaning retire- do-Irr-I DM
In other words I will retire okay. (Chandra)

(164) suṭi-haan **pur-t-ai** aagaami maašo-r noi taarik.. **jaai-t-u-gaa**
vacation-Cl over-Irr-III next month-Gen nine date.. go-Irr-I- Cl
The vacation will be over on the ninth of next month..I will go. (Suchitra)

(165) risaalṭ epril-e **nikal- t-ay**
result April-in come-out-Irr-III
The result will come out in April. (Mohitush)

In the discourse on customary practices, *t* is also used to describe sequence of events as in (166). The occurrences of irrealis have been noted in narratives, when sequences of a number of customary or habitual events are reported (See Elliot 2000).

(166) poyllaa maane raas- daari aag-goi **hikaai-t- ay**.
first means Rasa-teacher one-Cl teach-Irr-III
At first a *Rasa lila* expert will teach.

taar pore jemon mo-r boyoš anujaai ..
then suppose ISg-Gen age according
Then girls of my age..,

baa mo-r khulli-go jeṭi-go mo-r loge raas-haan-aat **humai-t-ay**
or ISg-Gen younger-Cl elder-Cl ISg-Gen with Rasa-Cl-Loc enter-Irr-III
Or girls both older and younger to me will enter the *Rasa lila* with me.

maane phurti e-haan aarki
means fun Det-Cl DM
There is lot of fun okay.

taar pore aami raas-haan je-šamay **hik-t-aaŋ-gaay**..
then IPl Rasa-Cl Rel-time learn-Irr-I- Cl
Afterwards when we learn the *Rasa*.. (Namita)

**Verb - ŋ [Verb-Future]**

(167) prabu mi taa-iyaa kitaa kor-t-u mi **mor-i-ŋ**
God ISg live-Pcpl what do-Irr-I ISg die-i-Irr
Lord! What will I do by living? I shall die. (Virmani)

(168) fon nombor- go **di-ŋ**
phone number-Cl give-Irr
(I) will give (you) the phone number. (Renu)

**Verb - b [Verb-Future]**

(169) Raas-haan **cei-b-e-gaa**
Rasa-Cl watch-Irr-II-Cl
You will watch the *Rasa lila*. (Urmila)

(170) ou-go **jiŋ-b-o**
Det-Cl win-Irr-III
He will win. (Johny)

(171) taaraa **aai-b-aa** paas-taarik
IIIPl come-Irr-III five- date
They will come on the fifth. (Vibha)

**Verb - m [Verb-Future]**

(172) kun din **mor-m-u**?
which day die-Irr- I
When will I die? (Nany)

(173) biyaa-th taai-re lo-iyaa aaiske **jaai-m-u**
marriage-Loc IIISg-Fem-Dat take-Pcpl today go- Irr- I
I will go to the wedding with her today. (Debobala)

### 2.4.3.2 Imperative in BP

In many languages imperative is denoted by affixless verbal base (Sadock and Zwicky 1985). On the other hand, there are also many languages in the world where the imperative constructions require irrealis marking (See Elliot 2000). The verbs in imperative constructions are not marked for tense, aspect or mood in BP although the imperatives are variably marked by person markers. For instance, a verb may be either marked by zero affix (unmarked) as shown in (174) or affixed by *is*, as seen in (175). The prohibitive is marked by *is*, as in (176). The hortative is marked by the third person marker *k* as shown in (177).

(174) epei **aah- Ø**
here come-Imp
Come here! (Janki)

(175) maalṭep-ar kaam **kor- is**
temple-Gen work do -Imp
Do temple's work! (Milan)

(176) mo-r yaari-th nau **humaa-is**
ISg-Gen story-Loc Neg enter-Imp
Don't interfere! (Lilavati)

(177) kaam-haan **kor-o-k**
work-Cl do-o-Hor
Let him do the work! (Chandra)

### 2.4.3.3 Conditional in BP

In BP, the protasis (if) clauses that is, the conditional clauses are marked either by affixing *le* to the verb or by using the word *jodi* 'if' and the event or the consequent clauses are marked by the irrealis marker *t* affixed to the verb in unreal conditionals as in (178)-(181). In pidgins and creoles, the same preverbal auxiliary is used to mark verbs expressing future and consequent clauses of conditionals (Bickerton 1975, Singler 1988).

(178) raatik-ar iskul aa-go **kul-le**
night-Gen school one-Cl open-if

kaani e-haan u taanu šaijja **pei-t-aay**
little Det-Cl Emph IIIPl help get-Irr-III
If a Night School is opened then they will get a little help. (Raju)

(179) ti mo-r lilaa-haan kor ti sau pei-t-ei,
IISg ISg-Gen Lila-Cl do IISg child get-Irr-II

ou-re **kor-le pei-t- ei**
Det-Dat do-if get-Irr-II
You do a *Rasa lila* for me, you will get a child. If you do that, then you will get (a child). (Sharat)

(180) haante ou-taa **jodi** di-taa-r-aa ou-taa-loi taanu **paa- kor-t-aay**
so Det-Cl if give-Cl-Pres Prog-III Det-Cl-Inst IIIPl read-do-Irr-III
So if they are giving these (slate, books), then they will study with these things.
(Anu)

(181) mo-r beyak daadaay **jodi** paarmišon naa de
ISg-Gen brother Dada if permission Neg give

mi biyaa nau **kor-t-u**
ISg marriage Neg do-Irr-I
If my elder brother does not approve, then I will not marry. (Gauri)

#### 2.4.3.4 Counterfactual in BP

In BP, there is variability in the marking of counterfactuals. The counterfactuals can be marked by the co-occurrence of past markers *l* and *s* in the sequence *l* preceding *s*, and the person marker and/or an epenthetic vowel intervening between these two markers. Both the conditional clauses and the event clauses are marked by the *l* and *s*, as in (182)-(183). The counterfactual meaning in many languages is often conveyed by a combination of past plus future or past alone (Winford 2000a, Ping and Shirai 2000). This may be due to the fact that these events as in (182)-(183) had the potential to occur in the past if the condition in the conditional clauses had been realized (See Elliot 2000).

(182) mo-re me di-yaa kaani- maani bul- iyaa **taai-l-oi-s**
ISg-Dat DM give-Pcpl little and like say-Pcpl stay-Pst-III-Pst

te ebaakaa taa u me paišaa-r maanu-go **oi- l- oi - s**
then now IIISg-Masc also DM money-Gen man- Cl Be-Pst-III-Pst
Had he kept some money with me, then he would have been a rich man today.
(Lilavati)

(183) mi jodi tiaag naa **kor-l- u-s**
ISg if sacrifice Neg do-Pst-I-Pst

te taa šompurno.. šoŋšaaar-i-go **por-l-u-gaa-i-s**
then IIISg-Masc totally.. family-man-Cl fall-Pst-I-Cl-i-Pst
If I would not have sacrificed then he would have been completely involved in family life. (Anu)

On the other hand, Elliot (2000) notes that apodoses (consequent clauses) of counterfactuals attract irrealis marking as they are located in a possible rather than real world. In BP, the counterfactuals can be marked by the irrealis marker *t* as well. For instance, in (184) the consequent clause is marked by the irrealis marker *t*.

(184) aaji ou saakri-haan taai-le ebaakaa penšɔn-tenšɔn **pei-t-o**
today Det job -Cl stay-if now pension and like get-Irr-III
If he had the job today then he would have got pension now. (Lilavati)

The irrealis categories in BP display variability in marking. Though BP employs *t* primarily to express the irrealis functions, other forms are also used to encode the same function. The affixes *t, ŋ, b, m* are used to express future situations. The counterfactuals are indicated either by *t* or by combining past markers *l* and *s* together. The imperatives are not marked for TAM categories.

**Summary**

We have seen that in Tibeto-Burman languages, the TAM system generally shows a two way categorization: future versus non-future. The non-future subsumes both the past and the present. Nevertheless, various kinds of affixes are used to designate temporal and aspectual specifications. But in the varieties of eastern Bengali, TAM system demonstrate a tripartite nomenclature. For instance, there is separation of past, present and future. BP being a contact language, the TAM system demonstrates some properties of both these language groups. However, BP also shows many features which are not present in Tibeto-Burman as well as in Indo-Aryan (especially Eastern Bengali). These features may be seen as linguistic innovations in BP, a process which characterizes contact languages.

Table 2.6 suggests that BP shares some of the TAM categories and their markers with HB, but also deviates from HB with regard to some other (especially aspect) categories and their forms. The TAM categories are indicated by inflectional affixes in both the languages.

The past tense is instantiated by *l* and *s* in both BP and HB. The variants [l ~ s] locates situations in the past contexts and do not distinguish the degree of remoteness

from the reference point.[33] There is no category of present independent of (present) habitual and present progressive.[34]

| **TAM Categories** | **BP TAM Forms** | **HB TAM Forms** |
|---|---|---|
| ***Tense*** | | |
| *Past Tense* | *l ~ s* | *l ~ s* |
| ***Aspect*** | | |
| *Present Progressive* | *r ~ s ~ te-s* | *r* |
| *Past Progressive* | *r* | *aat-aas-l* |
| *Future Progressive* | - | *aat-thaak-b/m* |
| *(Present) Habitual* | *r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s* | *Ø* |
| *Past Habitual* | *l ~ r ~ t ~ s* | *t* |
| *Past Perfect* | *sl* | *sl* |
| ***Mood (Irrealis)*** | | |
| *Future* | *t ~ ŋ ~ b ~ m* | *t ~ b ~ m* |
| *Conditional* | *t* | *t ~ b ~ m* |
| *Counterfactual* | *t ~ l-s* | *l ~ paar-t* |

*Table 2.6 TAM categories and their forms in BP and HB*

- Not found in the data

The variant *s* and *l* co-occur in both BP and HB. The sequence *s* and *l* encode past perfect meaning in both BP and HB.

BP shows maximum divergence from HB, when it comes to the indication of the aspect category. In BP, aspect is represented by the imperfective, which subsumes both progressive and habitual. In contrast HB makes a clear distinction between progressive

and habitual. The aspectual category of imperfective in BP reveals lot of variability and complexity (See table 2.6). In BP, the progressive situations embedded in the present are assigned by three markers [r ~ s ~ te-s]. The progressive situations indicated by *r* can have past temporal specifications as well. The temporality is inferred from discourse cues or temporal adverbs. Instances of future progressive situations in BP are not attested in my data. However, a progressive situation marked by *r* can have future reference, provided the future context is to be specified by other factors such as, temporal adverbs, discourse cues etc.[35] Unlike BP, HB progressive situations do not show variability in marking. In HB, present progressive situations are expressed by *r* alone. Though the forms *te-s* and *s* perform progressive functions in many varieties of Bengali (Chatterjee 1926), these forms do not indicate progressive meaning in HB. In HB, the progressive situations embedded in the past and future are indicated by separate forms.

In BP, variability in marking is seen in the habitual category as well. The (present) habitual meaning is expressed by [r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s]. But in HB, (present) habitual meaning is signified by Ø alone. The variant Ø is present in both the language varieties. The past habitual in BP is denoted by [r ~ l ~ t ~ s], whereas in HB only *t* is used to convey past habitual meaning. In BP, the past tense markers *l* and *s* extend to aspectual categories as well, and some of the aspectual markers perform both progressive and habitual functions. Thus temporal adverbs and discourse cues play a crucial role in specifying the temporal and aspectual characteristics in BP. On the basis of studies of Carribean creoles, Winford (2000b) points out that the imperfective category is grammaticalized quite differently across Carribbean creoles. He observes in some of these varieties such as Sranan, the notions of progressive and habitual are subsumed under a single imperfective category, and on the other hand, there are many other varieties which do not have one unified category of imperfective. In these varieties progressive and past habitual are grammaticalized as distinct categories, and present habituality is conveyed by various means. Both the characteristics noted by Winford are visible in BP. We have seen that the forms *r* and *s* conflate the category of progressive as well as habitual, which is neutral with respect to time-specification. There are many probable explanations for the presence of *r* and *s* in both progressive and habitual

situations in BP. First, it may be due to the influence of Tibeto-Burman languages, which have also contributed to the formation of BP (See Satyanath and Laskar 2008a). Many varieties of Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in Manipur do not make a distinction between progressive and habitual. However, in Meitei, there is a distinction between the habitual and the progressive category (Bhatt and Ningomba 1995, Chelliah 1997). Second, the habitual and progressive are subsumed in one imperfective category in many creoles (Bickerton 1975, 1981, Winford 2000b, Migge and Goury 2008). Third, there are also languages where same device is used for indicating habitual, progressive and other present situations (Bybee et al.1994).

BP resembles the HB irrealis categories and forms to a great extent. The future markers in both the languages are more or less the same. However, in BP one of the variant *m* is also realized as *ŋ*. The conditionals and counterfactuals nevertheless demonstrate some differences between BP and HB.

From the above discussion, it can said that in the expression of past tense and irrealis categories, BP shows some similarities with HB and the Eastern Bengali varieties in general, but differs widely from these varieties in the description of aspectual categories. The aspectual categories in BP display complexity and shows deviance from Eastern Bengali including HB.

Typological classifications of languages have been made based on the importance accorded to tense or aspect or mood in languages (Bhat 1999a). In Laskar (2008a) I discussed the various possibilities BP TAM system can be incorporated in, and argued for a realis: irrealis opposition as the most suited classification. In Laskar (2008b), however I argued for a tripartite division of the TAM system. Based on the discussion in this chapter, I propose that BP has three categories tense, aspect and mood which are on equal footing. They cannot combine with each other. For instance, tense category is represented by past tense only. Chung and Timberlake (1985) suggest that languages generally do not make tripartite oppositions but generally show bipartite oppositions such as past/non-past or future/non-future. The aspect category does not distinguish perfective and imperfective

oppositions. BP has only imperfective category, reflecting a wide range of variable marking. The imperfective category is restricted to non-future situations. The tense and aspect markers cannot combine with each other. In the mood category, there is only irrealis category. The irrealis mood category reflects variability in marking. The imperatives are not marked for tense, aspect, or mood.

The tense, aspect and mood markers are fluid and perform multiple functions in BP. One cannot predict a priori the function of any of the TAM marker without taking account of the context in which an event occurs. Lack of correspondence between form and their meaning has been observed in various languages of the world, especially contact languages (Holms 1988). Discourse contexts and temporal adverbs play a pivotal role in inferring temporal or aspectual information required in particular contexts.

The variability in the tense, aspect and mood categories in BP is discussed in the next chapter. Though I have proposed a tripartite system for BP, for the purpose of analysis and comparison across the two systems, data was coded for seven variables (one tense, five variables relating to aspect and one mood) for BP and eight variables for HB as in Chapter III. To avoid subjectivity, semantics was used as the principle criteria for determining the meaning and the function of various markers.

## Notes

[1] Following Comrie (1976), I use the term situation for verbs denoting states, dynamic actions, events, and processes etc.

[2] Comrie (1985: 36) though uses the term absolute tense, he considers it misleading as strictly speaking absolute time reference is not possible. The only way of locating a situation in time is relative to some other already established time point. He however acknowledges the role of the present moment as the reference point in the definitions of the tense systems across the world languages.

[3] Bybee et al. (1994: 237) observe that realis and irrealis are not very commonly realized in a language as a binary morphological distinction, and often a mismatch is seen between realis and irrealis marking and actual and non-actual events. They assume that "mood does not index the truth value of a proposition in any abstract sense, but rather tells us the extent to which the speaker is willing to ASSERT the truth of a proposition" (Bybee et al. 1994: 239).

[4] Dahl and Velupillai (2005: 268) state that if there existed "tense languages" or "aspect languages" then there would be a negative correlation between imperfectives and perfectives on the one hand, and pasts and futures on the other. But the data does not support such claims and there are more languages in their sample which have both the aspectual and temporal categories.

[5] Bickertion's Language Bioprogram Hypothesis (LBH) claims that the similarities across creoles and child languages are due to the presence of genetically coded species-specific program (bioprogram) for language. This bioprogram enables the children of pidgin (impoverished languages) speaker to construct a grammar in the form of creoles. In Bickerton's view creole languages and child languages are closer to Universal Grammar (See Lefebvre 2004). The LBH falls under the Universalist Hypothesis of creole genesis.

[6] The works of Van Name (1986-70), Thompson (1961) and Taylor (1971) also draw attention to TMA (Singler 1990). Muysken (1981: 193) summarizes the observation regarding the TMA system in creoles in these works in the following way: (a) each Creole language tends to have three of them: a past tense marker, a potential mood marker, and a durative aspect marker. (b) When we find more than one particle accompanying a verb, the particles always occupy a fixed order: tense, mood, aspect, main verb. The combinations of the particles are interpreted in fixed and rather complex ways.

[7] Meitei is referred as Manipuri in Bhat and Ningomba (1995).

[8] The form *li* has many alternants depending on the sound which precedes it (Bhat and Ningomba 1995).

[9] Chelliah (1997: 232) observes that future tense denoted by the sequence *kəni* can be opposed to future tense expressed by the suffixation of the copula directly on the verb root. For instance *kəni* suggests the possibility of an action whereas copula alone denotes that the action will certainly take place in the future. The potential and non-potential mood markers may even indicate the potentially realizable/unrealizable actions or states in the past. In Chelliah (1997) *gə* is also realized as *kə*.

[10] According to Chelliah (1997: 217) *khi* means 'still already, yet' and it indicates the speaker's view point regarding the time frame within which an action is executed or a state is realized. The speaker can indicate that an action continues past the expected state (still Ving,), completed before the expected state (already Ved) or have not begun at the appropriate time (is yet to V). The exact meaning referred by *khi* is determined by the tense of the event. For details see Chelliah (1997: 217).

[11] Chelliah (1997) considers *ləm* an indirect evidence marker.

[12] Bengali is categorized into dialects depending on the region where it is spoken (See Grierson 1903, Chatterjee 1926). Bengali is broadly classified into two branches: Western and Eastern branches. The Western branch is further sub-divided into (i) Radha, (ii) Varendra and (iii) Kamrupa groups. Radha

branches into South Western Bengali and Western Bengali, which is the standard colloquial variety (See Chatterjee 1926, Bhattacharya 2001). Eastern Bengali is spoken in parts of Assam, Tripura in India, parts of Bangladesh, including Sylhet (Grierson 1903).

[13] Chatterjee (1926) makes a distinction between Standard Literary Bengali and Standard Colloquial Bengali. In the discussion in this dissertaion Standard Bengali subsumes both the varieties. However, if there is any diffference in the two varieties with regard the use of any of the TAM forms, then the distinction is discussed.

[14] Future is discussed under tense in Eastern Bengali and Standard Bengali in the existing literature. Though in this table "future" is considered under tense category in HB also, it is considered as a mood (irrealis) category in HB (See Section 2.3.5.3.1).

[15] The term hodiernal is taken from Dahl (1985: 125) to refer to "today".

[16] *s* is realized as *c* after alveolar nasal sounds.

[17] The *s* in the sequence *sl* is also realized as *š* by some speakers.

[18] When ever two glosses are cited, it should be assumed that the first gloss provides the literal meaning and the second gloss the intended meaning.

[19] Imperatives and hortatives refer to the expression of a wish of a speaker concerning a future situation (See Van Der Auwera et al. 2005: 294). These expressions communicate a plea to the addressee(s) to assist in realizing the wish. In imperatives, the person in charge of the desired future state is the addressee or addressee(s), whereas in hortatives it is not so (Van Der Auwera et al. 2005: 294).

[20] Chatterjee (1926) classifies the history of Bengali language into three stages: (i) Old Bengali (OB), (ii) Middle Bengali (MB) and (iii) New Bengali (NB).

[21] Detail description of ordering of the TAM forms and the person, number inflection with respect to the verb stem is given in Laskar (2008a).

[22] The use of verb 'Be' is not common in BP.

[23] In BP, when the past markers *s* and *l* co-occur, a vowel *i* is inserted between the two.

[24] The affix *s* takes an epenthetic vowel *e* before it when the verb stem ends in a consonant (See Laskar 2008a).

[25] The temporal adverbials *ebaakaa, epei* have a wide range of meaning. For instance "*epei*" can mean now, at present, these days, currently.

[26] *Mehendi* is a paste made out of henna leaves to dye hair and body. Designs are made with the paste and applied in palms generally.

[27] This has been observed in Chatterjee (1926) for Bengali.

[28] Dahl (1985) uses the term pluperfect for past perfect. He suggests that pluperfect tends to be used for referring to the remote past. He further notes that many languages may not have a separate category of perfect but may still have a pluperfect.

[29] Though it is verb 'Be', based on the functions that it performs in a given context it has been labeled as progressive or habitual or Be as the case may be.

[30] *Kuttei* is a traditional cloth of the Bishnupriyas.

[31] *Baupaagli* or *Naališaag* refers to the leaf of jute.

[32] *Iralpa* is a traditional food of the Bishnupriyas and the Meiteis.

[33] Past tense and perfective aspect intersect, and in this sense [l] and [s] can be alternatively treated as perfective markers in BP and HB (See Laskar 2008a). But as majority of the situations indicated by [l] and [s] simply locate situations in the past (prior to the reference point) and do not connote characteristics of perfective aspect, I have treated these two forms as past tense forms.

[34] The occurrence of verb 'Be' in existential constructions and non-verbal predicates (adjectival, locative) is not obligatory in BP.

[35] Through personal communication with some Bishnupriya speakers.

## Chapter - III

## Linguistic Constraints on TAM Variables

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a quantitative analysis of the variable expression of the TAM categories in BP as discussed in chapter II.[1] This is a detailed study of the contribution of the various linguistic factors in conditioning the distribution and choice of variants within and across the TAM categories. The constraints operating in BP (as used by the Bishnupriya speakers) are discussed together with HB (as used by the local Bengali speakers among themselves). A comparison of the constraints across the TAM categories in BP and HB would allow us to assess the relationship and alternation between the two systems and in addition, it would help us to see whether the two form a single system or distinct or overlapping systems within the speech of bilingual Bishnupriyas. However, the major focus of the discussion is to develop an account of the linguistic variability within BP. The relevant data on TAM from BP and HB was coded for the same factor groups. The two were however subjected to separate binomial multivariate analysis. The analysis in this chapter is based on the data elicited from the total linguistic repertoire of the Bishnupriyas and the local Bengali data from the Bengalis.

### 3.1 TAM Variables in BP and HB

Delimiting the envelope of variation and determination of the variable context is difficult in BP as a single variant performs an array of temporal, aspectual and modal functions. This is evident from the discussions in Chapter II. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are as many as nine mono-morphemic forms (affixes) such as [l], [s], [r], [t], [Ø], [m], [b], [ŋ], [sl] (derived from bi-morpheme Be plus past [l]) and one bi-morphemic form [te-s] that perform various TAM functions in BP.

| ***TAM Variables*** | | **[l]** | **[s]** | **[sl]** | **[r]** | **[t]** | **[Ø]** | **[b]** | **[m]** | **[ŋ]** | **[te-s]** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(Past Tense)* | *N* | 2780 | 1291 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4071 |
| | *%* | 68.2 | 31.7 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 46.6 |
| *(Present Habitual)* | *N* | 37 | 18 | - | 1625 | - | 208 | - | - | - | - | 1888 |
| | *%* | 2 | 1 | - | 86.1 | - | 11 | - | - | - | - | 21.6 |
| *(Past Habitual)* | *N* | 132 | 3 | - | 96 | 118 | | - | - | - | - | 349 |
| | *%* | 37.8 | 0.8 | - | 27.5 | 33.8 | - | - | - | - | - | 3.9 |
| *(Present Progressive)* | *N* | - | 14 | - | 545 | - | - | - | - | - | 13 | 572 |
| | *%* | - | 2.4 | - | 95.2 | - | - | - | - | - | 2.2 | 6.5 |
| *(Past Progressive)* | *N* | - | - | - | 273 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 273 |
| | *%* | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3.1 |
| *(Past Perfect)* | *N* | - | - | 129 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 129 |
| | *%* | - | - | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1.4 |
| *(Irrealis)* | *N* | - | - | - | - | 1279 | - | 81 | 16 | 71 | - | 1447 |
| | *%* | - | - | - | - | 88.4 | - | 5.6 | 1 | 4.9 | - | 16.5 |
| *Total* | *N* | 2949 | 1326 | 129 | 2539 | 1397 | 208 | 81 | 16 | 71 | 13 | 8729 |

*Table 3.1 Distribution of variants (N) across the TAM categories in BP*

In a column indicates that a particular variant is not attested in the data.[2]

| TAM Variables | | [l] | [s] | [sl] | [r] | [t] | [Ø] | [b] | [m] | [aat-aas-l] | [aat-thaak-m/b] | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(Past Tense)* | *N* | 280 | 1226 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1506 |
| | *%* | 18.5 | 81.4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 56.5 |
| *(Present Habitual)* | *N* | - | - | - | - | - | 380 | - | - | - | - | 380 |
| | *%* | - | - | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | - | - | 14.2 |
| *(Past Habitual)* | *N* | - | - | - | - | 189 | - | - | - | - | - | 189 |
| | *%* | - | - | - | | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | 7 |
| *(Present Progressive)* | *N* | - | - | - | 254 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 254 |
| | *%* | - | - | - | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 9.5 |
| *(Past Progressive)* | *N* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 40 | - | 40 |
| | *%* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 100 | - | 1.5 |
| *(Future Progressive)* | *N* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 10 | 10 |
| | *%* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 100 | 0.3 |
| *(Past Perfect)* | *N* | - | - | 7 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 7 |
| | *%* | - | - | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.3 |
| *(Irrealis)* | *N* | - | - | - | - | 115 | - | 105 | 59 | - | - | 279 |
| | *%* | - | - | - | - | 41.2 | - | 37.6 | 21.1 | - | - | 10.4 |
| Total | N | 280 | 1226 | 7 | 254 | 304 | 380 | 105 | 59 | 40 | 10 | 2665 |

*Table 3.2 Distribution of variants (N) across the TAM categories in HB*

Majority of the forms are multifunctional in the sense that many of these forms perform both tense and aspect functions. A similar phenomenon is observed in HB as well, that is, the TAM functions are performed by a number of variants. Keeping in view this variability, seven variables for BP and eight variables for HB were identified referring to the various tense, aspect and mood categories. An overall distribution of the TAM variables and their variants in BP and HB is provided in tables 3.1 and 3.2.

For the purposes of the quantitative analysis, the tense, aspect and mood variables were coded separately keeping in view the insights developed from the qualitative analysis. The details of coding schemes are provided in Appendix-IV.[3] The quantitative analysis presented here is based on statistical program Goldvarb 3.0b3 (Rand and Sankoff 2001). The statistical program first yields a distributional analysis, which provides the frequencies of the variants across the considered factor groups. The initial results are then subjected to a run of binomial step up/step down multiple logistic regression analysis (multivariate analysis), which tests the likelihood of all the factor groups in a step-wise fashion. The logistic regression analysis obtains the factor weights (probability) of factor groups for the variant and selects the factor groups that play a significant role in conditioning the choice of the variants (See Tagliamonte 2006). The analysis presented here is based on a total of 11394 tokens, comprising of 8729 tokens of BP and 2665 tokens of HB.

In the following sections I would discuss the variables (tense), (aspect) and (mood) separately.[4]

### 3.2 Tense

In BP, the tense category is represented by the past tense. The past tense in BP and HB shows variable marking and is denoted by [l ~ s]. Therefore the variable (past tense) was examined in the variable rule analysis. The results of the variable rule analysis are discussed in the following.

### 3.2.1 (Past Tense): [l ~ s]

Both BP and HB past tense data were coded for the same seven linguistic constraints to find out whether the past variants which are common to both the languages follow the same constraints or not (See table 3.3). Table 3.3 shows that for [l] and [s] in BP all the seven factor groups (constraints) that were coded were selected as significant at p-value < 0.005. However in HB, only two out of the six linguistic factors were found to be significant at p-value < 0.016.[5]

Formula: l/l+s

| Factor Groups | | BP | HB |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | [l ~ s] | [l ~ s] |
| 1 | *Patterns of language use* | Significant | - |
| 2 | *Grammatical person of the subject* | Significant | Significant |
| 3 | *Degree of remoteness* | Significant | Non-Significant |
| 4 | *Grammatical clauses* | Significant | Non-Significant |
| 5 | *Negativity* | Significant | Non-Significant |
| 6 | *Stativity* | Significant | Significant |
| 7 | *Lexical category* | Significant | Non-Significant |

*Table 3.3 Constraints operating in Past Tense category*

Initially, I had coded all the three variants, [l], [s] and [sl] for past. However, after seeing the distribution of the variants obtained from the distributional analysis, I decided not to consider [sl] in the variable rule analysis of past tense. This was because all the tokens (N= 129) of [sl] in BP were found to encode only remote past tense and yielded knockouts in other past contexts. The analysis of past as presented here is based on variants [l] and [s] only. The role of [sl] is discussed separately. A total of 4071 instances of past tense in BP and 1506 instances in HB were examined in the multivariable rule

program. The distribution of [l] and [s] as in table 3.4 suggests that in BP [l] marks the majority of the past situations, but in HB, [s] expresses the bulk of the past instances.

| ***Variants*** | **[l]** | | **[s]** | | **Total** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **BP** | **HB** | **BP** | **HB** | **BP** | **HB** |
| ***N*** | 2780 | 280 | 1291 | 1226 | 4071 | 1506 |
| ***%*** | 68.2 | 18.5 | 31.7 | 81.4 | | |

*Table 3.4 Frequencies of past tense variants in BP and HB*

In the following, I will discuss the contribution of various factor groups on past tense marking in BP and HB.

**(I) Patterns of language use**

Since the Bishnupriyas are active bilinguals, one of the factor groups considered in the multivariable rule program was the bilingual patterns of language use which constituted three kinds of linguistic data that emerged in the speech of the Bishnupriyas: (i) Bishnupriya monolingual (Ll) data as in (1), (ii) Bengali monolingual (L2) data as in (2), and (iii) Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data as in (3). The Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data refers to the Bishnupriya speech which is free from overt HB insertions. Even though Bishnupriya shares a majority of the lexicon with Bengali, there are ample phonological, morphological and syntactic differences between these two systems (See Laskar 2003a and Satyanath and Laskar 2008a). The Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data refers to overt HB insertions in Bishnupriya sentences. The overt HB insertions, which were considered as code-switched fragments were differentiated from Bengali loan-words and nonce borrowings in Bishnupriya. There are various studies which draw attention to the framework for distinguishing loan words and nonce borrowings from code-switches (Poplack et al. 1987). These studies claim that loan words and nonce borrowings follow the rule of L1, whereas code-switches adhere to the

rule of L2. In the present study, this criterion was also utilized to distinguish code-switches from established loan words and nonce borrowings. The Bengali monolingual data (L2) data in this study comprises of the HB speech which is devoid of overt L1 (Bishnupriya) insertions. In the data cited below HB data is given in italic both for L2 and for Bengali code-switches.[6]

**(1)** ***Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data*** **[l ~ s]**

(i) u-taa-r pisede caakri **eraa- di-l-o**
Det-Cl-Gen later job leave-give-Pst-III
After that (he) left the job. (Indra)

(ii) maanu o-haan maane nuaaraa os-e kobor e-haan **hun-e-s-e**
people Det-Cl means sick Be-III news Det-Cl hear-e-Pst-III
People heard the news (that she) was sick. (Babli)

**(2)** ***Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data*** **[l ~ s]**

(i) *taaraa tin-o-jon-e miliyaa ei kaamlaa-ṭaa-re* ***raak-l-aa***
IIIPl three-Det-Cl-Nom together Det servant-Cl-Dat keep-Pst-III
The three of them together kept the servant. (Bhawani)

(ii) *ek ṭu pore taa-r baabaa-ṭaa* ***aai-s-e***
a little later IIISg-Masc-Gen father-Cl come-Pst-III
His father came a little later. (Ramen)

**(3)** ***Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) data*** **[l ~ s]**

(i) raastaa-r upei pei-l-u naay
road-Gen there get-Pst-I DM
I met (him) at the road, okay.

paa-naa-r pisede taa-re
get-Pcpl-Gen later IIISg-Masc-Dat
Having met him later,

[“*sir ek-* ***ṭ****aa mini****ṭ****” ko-iyaa* ***daaraai-l-aam*****]**
Sir one-Cl minute say-Pcpl stand-Pst-I
I said “Sir one minute” and stood. (Shefali)

(ii) [*bou* ***koi-s-e*** *to* ] bo bul-l-o
sit say-Pst-III Emph sit say-Pst-III
He said, “sit”, he said, “sit”.

aar boi-l-u aarki,
and sit-Pst-I DM
And I sat okay. (Urmila)

| ***Factor Group*** | **Probability** | **Probability** |
|---|---|---|
| ***(I) Patterns of Language Use*** | [l] | [s] |
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | 0.56 | 0.43 |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | 0.22 | 0.77 |
| *Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | 0.03 | 0.96 |

*Table 3.5 Probability of [l] and [s] for patterns of language use in BP*

The result of the multivariate analysis as cited in table 3.5 suggests that the variant [l] is slightly favoured in Bishnupriya monolingual data (L1), whereas [s] is highly preferred in Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data (C-S), followed by Bengali monolingual data (L2).[7] This suggests that the Bishnupriyas display a shift towards [s], the predominant past marker in HB, when they code-switch to HB or interact in HB (L2).

The distribution of [l] and [s] across the patterns of language use of the Bishnupriyas and the HB data of the local Bengalis as in figure 3.1 suggests that though [s] is preferred in both L2 and the bilingual data (C-S), it is the code-switched data of the Bishnupriyas, which shows more proximity with the HB pattern of past marking. In fact,

the Bengali monolingual (L2) speech of the Bishnupriyas differs from the local Bengali (HB) of the Bengalis with regard to the frequency of [l] and [s] as shown in figure 3.1.

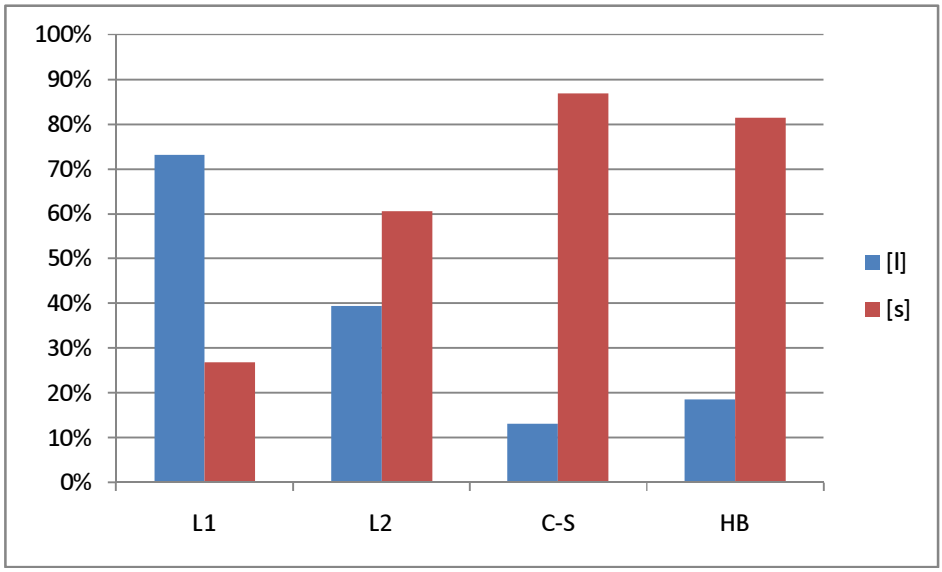



*Figure 3.1 Distribution of [l] and [s] in past contexts across BP and HB*

**(II) Grammatical person of the subject**

The verb shows agreement with the subject in BP and HB. Grammatical person of the subject is indicated by the inflectional affixes in both these languages. The variants [l] and [s] could not be coded for second person plural subject as there was no instance of this category in the corpus.

Table 3.6 demonstrates that subjects with every grammatical person but third person singular subjects select [l] more in BP. In contrast, the third person singular subjects display preference for the use of [s]. But the third person plural subject favours [l] to [s] indicating a split between singular and plural in the third person subject context with regard to the use of past variants.

| *Factor Group* | **BP** | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(II) Grammatical Person of the Subject*** | **[l]** | **[s]** | **[l]** | **[s]** |
| *I Person Singular* | 0.60 | 0.39 | 0.54 | 0.45 |
| *I Person Plural* | 0.81 | 0.18 | 0.78 | 0.21 |
| *II Person Singular* | 0.64 | 0.35 | 0.70 | 0.29 |
| *III Person Singular* | 0.35 | 0.65 | 0.44 | 0.55 |
| *III Person Plural* | 0.64 | 0.35 | 0.38 | 0.61 |

*Table 3.6 Probability of [l] and [s] for grammatical person of subject in BP and HB*

This constraint operates in HB too. HB shows the BP pattern of past marking with regard to first person, second person and third person (only singular) subject contexts. However, the split between third person singular and plural subjects that is observed in BP is not there in HB.

**(4)** ***First Person Singular Subject***

(i) obaakaa niyaam phuti **bun-l-u** mi
then much cloth weave-Pst- I ISg
I wove lot of clothes at that time. (Nany)

(ii) Guwaahaaṭi-th mo-r mohonak-ar-aaŋ mi **ge-s-u-gaa**
Guwahati-Loc ISg-Gen aunt-Gen-Dat ISg go-Pst-I-Cl
I went to my aunt's place in Guwahati. (Babli)

(5) ***Second Person Singular Subject***

(i) sau aa-go u naa **pei-l-e** ti
child one-Cl Emph Neg get-Pst-II IISg
You did not get a child. (Namita)

(ii) ti haabi bel-iyaa epei **aah-e-s-ot**
IISg all leave-Pcpl here come-e-Pst-II
You left everything and came here. (Arun)

(6) ***Third Person Singular Subject***

(i) Manipur-e upei **ge-l-o-gaa** caakri e-haan-ar- kaa
Manipur-Loc then go-Pst-III-Cl job one-Cl-Gen-Dat
At that time (he) went to Manipur for a job. (Johny)

(ii) daaŋar trunk- o-go u **ni-s-i-gaa** sor-goi
big trunk-Det-Cl also take-Pst-III-Cl thief-Cl
The thief took away the big trunk. (Janki)

**(7)** ***First Person Plural Subject***

(i) aami jelei haabi thaanaa-th **ge-l-aaŋ**
IPl women all jail-Loc go-Pst-I
We all women went to the jail. (Gayatri)

(ii) aami **gunj-e-s-i** raati taanu-r gar-e
IPl sleep-e-Pst-III night IIIPl-Gen house-Loc
We slept at night in their house. (Dipti)

**(8)** ***Third Person Plural Subject***

(i) e-haan aah-i-l u-haan.. ou-go-re **di-l-aa**
one-Cl come-i-Pst Det-Cl .. Det-Cl-Dat give-Pst-III
There was a post, (they) gave it to him.

aamaa-r o-go-re naa **di-l-aa**
I-Gen Det-Cl-Dat Neg give-Pst-III
(They) did not give (it) to my one. (Lilavati)

(ii) yaam maanu baairaa saakri **kor-e-s-e**
many people outside job do-e-Pst-III
Many people worked outside. (Suchitra)

**(III) Degree of remoteness**

Degree of remoteness from the reference point also influences the distribution of the past variants [l] and [s] in BP. Three factors such as immediate past as in (9), recent past as shown in (10) and remote past as illustrated in (11) were tested to see whether remoteness distinctions had any role in determining the variability in past tense reference.[8]

**(9)** ***Immediate Past***

(i) tei maadaan-e oupei-th **ge-l-o**
IIISg-Fem afternoon-in there-Loc go-Pst-III
She went there in the afternoon. (Urmila)

(ii) mo-r banak-go epei **aah-e-s-e**
ISg-Gen sister-Cl now come-e-Pst-III
My sister came just now. (Sunil)

**(10)** ***Recent Past***

(i) taanu Guwaați **ge-l-o-gaa** ebaakaa caakri-r-kaa
IIISg Gauhati go-Pst-III-Cl recently job-Gen-Dat
He went to Guwahati recently for a job. (Sharat)

(ii) haante ebaakaa.. Naagpur-e **ge-s-e-gaa**
so recently.. Nagpur-Loc go-Pst-III-Cl
So (he) went to Nagpur recently. (Sharat)

**(11)** ***Remote Past***

(i) oubaakaa .. 1978-e mi caakri-haan **eraa- di-l-u**
at that time 1978-in ISg job-Cl leave- give-Pst-I
At that time .. in 1978 I left the job. (Satyendra)

(ii) taanu oupei **ge-s-e-gaa** triš basar aage
IIISg there go-Pst-III- Cl thirty year before
He went there thirty years back. (Raju)

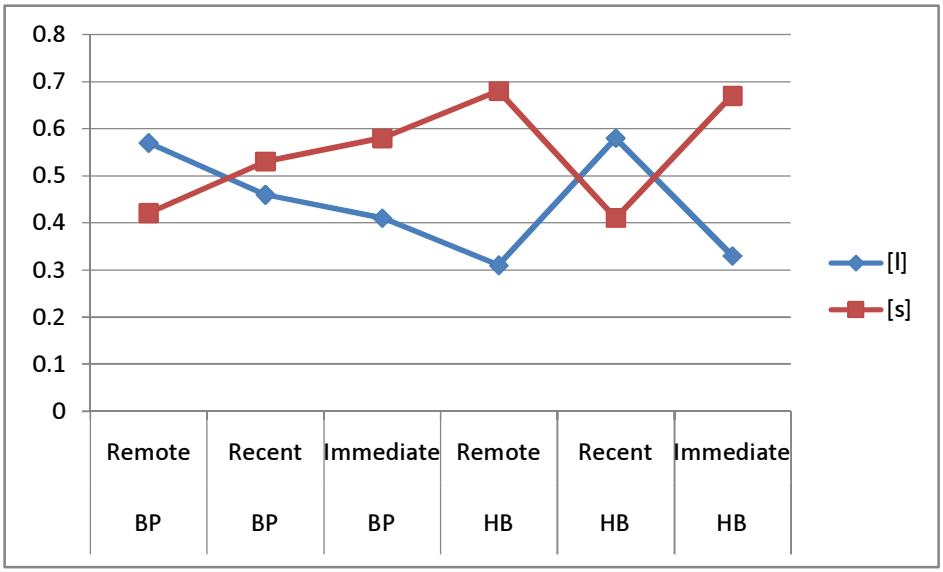



*Figure 3.2 [l ~ s] across past contexts in BP and HB*

| ***Past*** | **Remote** | | | **Recent** | | | **Immediate** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **[l]** | **[s]** | **[sl]** | **[l]** | **[s]** | **[sl]** | **[l]** | **[s]** | **[sl]** |
| ***BP*** | 0.57 | 0.42 | 100% | 0.46 | 0.53 | - | 0.41 | 0.58 | - |
| ***HB*** | 0.31 | 0.68 | 100% | 0.58 | 0.41 | - | 0.33 | 0.67 | - |

*Table 3.7a Past variants across different past contexts in BP and HB*

The result of multivariate analysis as in figure 3.2 and table 3.7a points out that in BP past variants [l] and [s] distinguish the degree of remoteness. The likelihood of use of [l] is more in remote (distant) past situations. On the contrary, [s] is preferred maximally in immediate past contexts, followed by recent past contexts. As a result, the frequency of [l] declines in the immediate past and recent past contexts. In BP, [l] is associated with remoteness and [s] with immediacy and proximity. But in HB, the degree of remoteness

is not distinguished. [l] and [s] denote single past tense in HB. In addition to [l] and [s], a third variant [sl] also is used in remote past contexts alone (See Chapter II). However, the distribution of [sl] as in table 3.7b suggests that [sl] accounts for only a fraction of the total instances of remote past situations in both BP and HB. A majority of remote past situations are indicated by [l] in BP, but by [s] in HB.

| ***Language*** | **Remote Past** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **[l]** | **[s]** | **[sl]** |
| ***BP*** | 68% | 24% | 8% |
| ***HB*** | 9% | 84% | 6% |

*Table 3.7b Distribution of past tense variants in remote past contexts*

**(IV) Grammatical clauses**

Differences in 'grammatical clauses' have an implication on the frequency and choice of past marker in BP. The various types of clauses subsumed under this factor group are conditional-consequent clauses as in (12), adverbial clauses as in (13), interrogative clauses as in (14), relative-correlative clauses as shown in (15), and all the other types of clauses were clubbed within the 'other type' as demonstrated in (16).[9] The adverbial clauses include various types of clauses denoting a range of meanings such as time, location, cause, reason, manner etc.

**(12)** ***Conditional-<u>Consequent clauses</u>***

(i) taanu- re naa dek-le mo-r-taa nuŋei naa **laag-i-l**
III-Dat Neg see-if ISg-Gen-Cl happy Neg feel-i-Pst
I did not feel happy if I did not see them. (Anu)

(ii) e-taa selkom kaalaa oi-le haar- pei-s mo-re **kaa-s-e**
Det-Cl milk black Be-if understand-get-Imp ISg-Acc eat-Pst-III
If this milk becomes black, (then) understand (he) ate me.

jodi dolaa oi-yaa taa-r taile maane naa **kaa-s-e**
if white Be-Pcpl remain-Pres Prog then means Neg eat-Pst-III
If it remains white then it means he did not eat me. (Minakshi)

**(13)** ***Adverbial clauses***

(i) oupei-th taanu-r naaŋ- haan **kaape-di-l-aa**
that time-in III-Gen name-Cl cut- give-Pst-III
At that times they cut his name off the rolls (terminated his job). (Bhawani)

(ii) haante mi bel-iyaa epei **aah-e-s-u**
so ISg leave-Pcpl here come-e-Pst-I
So I left (him) and came here. (Padma)

**(14)** ***Interrogative clauses***

(i) to-r jilak-are **aaŋ-kor-l-e -taa**?
IISg-Gen daughter-Dat ask-do-Pst-II- Interr
Did (you) ask your daughter? (Indra)

(ii) dwaar te.. kun-goi **kul-e-s-i**?
door so who-Cl open-e-Pst-III
So.. who opened the door? (Namita)

**(15)** ***Relative-Correlative clauses***

(i) o-go baijak je yaari-pori **di-l-o**
Det-Cl sister-in-law Rel story and like give-Pst-III
The one who told you stories is (my) sister-in-law. (Ranajit)

(ii) maasṭaar je-go mo-re **baagaa- di-s-e**,
teacher Rel-Cl ISg-Dat teach-give-Pst-III,

o-go mo-re **aaŋ-kor-e-s-e**…
Cor-Cl ISg-Dat ask- do-e-Pst-III
The teacher who taught me asked me … (Dipu)

**(16)** ***Other type clauses***

(i) ou leirik u-haan mi **paa- kor-l-u**
Det book Det-Cl ISg read-do-Pst-I
I read that book. (Bojendra)

(ii) hincaapi-go taa-r baapok-are **maar-e-s-e**
demoness-Cl IIISg-Masc-Gen father-Acc kill-e-Pst-III
The demoness killed his father. (Minakshi)

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(IV) Grammatical Clauses*** | **[l]** | **[s]** | **[l]** | **[s]** |
| *Conditional-Consequent* | 0.80 | 0.19 | 0.90 | 0.09 |
| *Adverbial* | 0.75 | 0.24 | 0.44 | 0.56 |
| *Other* | 0.50 | 0.49 | 0.47 | 0.52 |
| *Interrogative* | 0.35 | 0.64 | 0.77 | 0.22 |
| *Relative-Correlative* | 0.28 | 0.71 | 0.42 | 0.57 |

*Table 3.8 Probability of [l] and [s] for grammatical clause in BP and HB*

Table 3.8, which shows the results of multivariate analysis, reveals that grammatical clauses in BP display two patterns of past tense marking. The consequent clauses in conditionals and the adverbial clauses favour [l] more, whereas relative-correlative and interrogative clauses choose [s] more.[10]

This factor group turned out to be significant for BP, but not for HB suggesting a difference in constraints operating in both the languages. A comparison of probabilistic

weights obtained by [l] and [s] for different grammatical clauses in BP and HB, however, shows that the pattern of past marking in conditional and relative-correlative clauses in both the two languages are alike. But adverbial clauses and interrogative clauses show a divergence between the two languages.

**(V) Negation**

Although the past variants can occur with both negative and non-negative sentences, there exists some relation between negation and the past tense marking in BP.

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(V) Negation*** | **[l]** | **[s]** | **[l]** | **[s]** |
| *Negative* | 0.18 | 0.82 | 0.37 | 0.62 |
| *Affirmative* | 0.54 | 0.45 | 0.50 | 0.49 |

*Table 3.9 Probability of [l] and [s] for negation in BP and HB*

The probabilities of [l] and [s] for negative and affirmative sentences in BP as shown in table 3.9 point out a negative association between negative sentences and the variant [l] as the probability of [l] for negative sentences is decisively low. On the other hand, the negative sentences strongly favour the variant [s]. In (17) and (18), the verb stem in negative clause is inflected by [s], whereas the same verb stem receives [l] marking in affirmative clause. The verbs occurring in negative sentences with the sense of 'never' are always marked by [s] as in (19)-(20).

Although negation did not turn out to be a significant constraint in the choice of past marker in HB, the probabilistic weights obtained by [l] and [s] for negative and affirmative sentences reveal a pattern of linguistic marking which is similar to BP (See

Table 3.9). However, the probability of use of [s] in negative sentences in BP is higher than HB.

(17) Kaal te **naa caa-s-u**, eo **cei-l-u** Gaaŋaajal
Kaal Emph Neg see-Pst-I Det see-Pst-I Gangajal
I did not see Kaal, I saw Gangajal. (Johny)

(18) aa-iyaa hourak-go **pei-l-u**,
come-Pcpl father-in-law-Cl get-Pst-I
I came and got (my) father-in-law,

houriek-go **naa paa-s-u..**
mother-in-law-Cl Neg get-Pst-I
I did not get (my) mother-in-law.. (Lilavati)

(19) aami te kuno-din ešaade čæir e-haan ṭɛbil e-haan **naa paa-s-i**
I Emph any-day like this chair one-Cl table one-Cl Neg get-Pst-I
I never got a chair, table like this in (my life). (Satyendra)

(20) biuṭi paarlaar aaji peiyaa **naa humaa-s-u**
beauty parlour today till Neg enter-Pst-I
I never entered a beauty parlour (till today). (Urmila)

**(VI) Stativity of the verb**

With reference to Caribbean creoles, Winford (1993) states that stativity plays an important role in the use and interpretation of certain tense/aspect markers. A relationship between stativity and choice of the past tense form is observed in both BP and HB. The use of [l] and [s] with stative and non-stative verbs in BP is illustrated in (21) and (22).

**(21)** ***Stative***

(i) tei mo-re yaam **tik- pei-l-o**
IIISg-Fem ISg-Dat much like- get-Pst-III
She liked me very much. (Milan)

(ii) Abijit-e u **haar- paa- s- e- taa** yaari
Abijit-Nom also understand-get-past-III -Cl story
Abijit also understood the story. (Gayatri)

**(22)** ***Non-Stative***

(i) epei mo-r putak -o-go-e mo-re yaam paisaa **di-l-o**
recently ISg-Gen son - Det-Cl-Nom ISg-Dat much money give-Pst-III
Recently my son gave me a lot of money. (Indra)

(ii) nuwaa mantri-goi malṭep o-go **hoŋ-kor-e-s-e**
new minister-Cl temple Det-Cl make-do-e-Pst-III
The new minister built the temple. (Suchitra)

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(VI) Stativity*** | **[l]** | **[s]** | **[l]** | **[s]** |
| *Stative* | 0.22 | 0.77 | 0.27 | 0.72 |
| *Non-Stative* | 0.54 | 0.45 | 0.54 | 0.45 |

*Table 3.10 Probability of [l] and [s] for stativity in BP and HB*

Table 3.10 shows that BP and HB reveal a similar pattern of past tense marking in stative and non-stative verbs. A slight preference for [l] is seen in non-stative verbs, but the stative verbs strongly favour [s] in both BP and HB.

**(VII) Lexical category**

All the verbs encoding past temporal reference were tested in the multivariate analysis to see whether verbs *per se* show any preference for any variant. BP has both simple and complex verbs. The complex verbs are formed by combining Verb/Noun/Adjective with Be ‘oi’/*pei* ‘get’/*kor* ‘do’/ *de* ‘give’ (See Laskar 2003a).[11] The verbs that have less than ten tokens are subsumed as “other” in the coding.

| Verbs | Gloss | [l] | [s] |
|---|---|---|---|
| taa | stay/remain | 0.96 | 0.03 |
| manei | want | 0.94 | 0.05 |
| paar | can | 0.79 | 0.20 |
| V/N/A + Be, e,g lom-oi- | finish | 0.76 | 0.23 |
| kaad | cry | 0.73 | 0.26 |
| nikul | take-out | 0.70 | 0.30 |
| aan | bring | 0.64 | 0.35 |
| maat, bul, koi, totor | say | 0.60 | 0.39 |
| dek, caa | see, watch | 0.60 | 0.40 |
| pei, V/N/A + pei | get | 0.59 | 0.41 |
| haar-pei | understand | 0.53 | 0.46 |
| kor, V/N/A + kor | do, ask etc | 0.51 | 0.49 |
| kei | eat | 0.50 | 0.49 |
| pid | wear | 0.49 | 0.50 |
| sal | manage | 0.49 | 0.50 |
| de | give | 0.42 | 0.58 |
| mor | die | 0.41 | 0.58 |
| aah | come | 0.39 | 0.60 |
| ni | take | 0.39 | 0.60 |
| Other | other | 0.38 | 0.61 |
| ge | go | 0.36 | 0.63 |
| raad | cook | 0.33 | 0.66 |
| por | fall | 0.32 | 0.67 |
| humei | enter | 0.28 | 0.72 |
| hun | hear | 0.27 | 0.73 |
| gunji | sleep | 0.15 | 0.84 |
| ta | keep | 0.04 | 0.95 |

*Table 3.11 Probability of [l] and [s] for different verbs in BP*

A look at table 3.11 suggests that different verbs behave differently with respect to past tense inflection in BP. We have seen that stative verbs disfavour [l], but there are some lexical exceptions. For instance, stative verbs such as *taa* 'stay/remain' and *manei* 'want' have a near categorical marking by variant [l]. It is to be noted that only one token of *taa* 'stay' and *manei* 'want' are not marked by [l] in my corpus. Apart from these two verbs, the other verbs, which strongly favour [l] include (i) modal verb *paar* 'can', (ii) complex verb, whose second element is verb 'Be' *oi*, (iii) *kaad* 'cry' and (iv) *nikul* 'come out/take out'.

Table 3.11 also shows that there are many verbs which do not show preference for [l]. These verbs favour [s]. Verbs such as (i) *ta* 'keep', (ii) *gunji* 'sleep', (iii) *hun* 'hear', and (iv) *haamaa* 'enter' show a strong inclination to be marked by [s]. 31 out of 35 instances of *ta* 'keep' are marked by [s]. Verbs of motion such as come, go and enter follow a pattern, that is, these verbs do not prefer [l].

However, there are a few verbs that hover around the median (0.5) and do not show any significance with regard to the selection of the past variant. These verbs include *sal* 'manage', *pid* 'wear', *kaa* 'eat' , *kor* 'do' (in simple verbs) and as second verb in complex verbs, as in *i-kor* 'compose'. The lexical constraints do not operate in HB.

#### 3.2.1.1 Analysis

BP shares the past tense forms with HB. But the pattern of distribution of the two forms [l ~ s] in these two languages displays an opposite trend. The form [l] dominates in BP, whereas [s] prevails in HB. The result of multivariate analysis as shown in table 3.12 suggests that though the past tense is marked by [l ~ s] in both these languages, the linguistic constraints conditioning the choice and frequency of the two variants in the two languages BP and HB are not exactly same.

In BP, the factor group which have the strongest effect (range=53) on the past variants is "the patterns of language use." In BP, [l] and [s] sketch a separation of the monolingual Bishnupriya repertoire from the bilingual speech. The Bishnupriyas prefer [l] to [s] in Bishnupriya monolingual speech. But they resort to [s] more when they either switch to HB or interact in local Bengali (HB), thereby indicating a shift towards the HB pattern in their bilingual discourse. This factor group was not applicable in HB.

"Grammatical clauses" turned out to be next important linguistic constraint in BP. Conditional-consequent and adverbial clauses select [l] more, whereas relative (including correlative) and interrogative clauses tend to use [s] more.

| Hierarchy of Linguistic Constraints | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Factor Groups** | **BP** | | **HB** | |
| **(I) Patterns of Language Use** | **[l]** | **[s]** | **[l]** | **[s]** |
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | 0.56 | 0.43 | - | - |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | 0.22 | 0.77 | - | - |
| *Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | 0.03 | 0.96 | - | - |
| | Range = 53 | | | |
| **(II) Grammatical Clauses** | | | | |
| *Conditional-Consequent* | 0.80 | 0.19 | [0.90] | [0.09] |
| *Adverbial* | 0.75 | 0.24 | [0.44] | [0.56] |
| *Interrogative* | 0.35 | 0.64 | [0.77] | [0.22] |
| *Relative-Correlative* | 0.28 | 0.71 | [0.42] | [0.57] |
| *Other* | 0.50 | 0.49 | [0.47] | [0.52] |
| | Range = 52 | | | |
| **(III) Grammatical Person of Subject** | | | | |
| *First Person Singular* | 0.60 | 0.39 | 0.54 | 0.45 |
| *First Person Plural* | 0.81 | 0.18 | 0.78 | 0.21 |
| *Second Person Singular* | 0.64 | 0.35 | 0.70 | 0.29 |
| *Third Person Singular* | 0.35 | 0.65 | 0.44 | 0.55 |
| *Third Person Plural* | 0.64 | 0.35 | 0.38 | 0.61 |
| | Range = 46 | | | |
| **(IV) Negation** | | | | |
| *Negative* | 0.18 | 0.82 | [0.37] | [0.62] |
| *Affirmative* | 0.54 | 0.45 | [0.50] | [0.49] |
| | Range = 36 | | | |
| **(V) Stative** | | | | |
| *Stative* | 0.22 | 0.77 | 0.27 | 0.72 |
| *Non-Stative* | 0.54 | 0.45 | 0.54 | 0.45 |
| | Range = 32 | | | |
| **(VI) Degree of Remoteness** | | | | |
| *Immediate Past* | 0.41 | 0.58 | [0.33] | [0.67] |
| *Recent Past* | 0.46 | 0.53 | [0.58] | [0.41] |
| *Remote Past* | 0.57 | 0.42 | [0.31] | [0.68] |
| | Range = 16 | | | |

*Table 3.12 Linguistic constraints on (Past Tense) Variable in BP and HB*

[ ] suggest that this factor group is not significant.

The factor group “grammatical clauses” is not significant for variability of past variants in HB. However, probabilities of [l] and [s] reveal that the conditional-consequent clauses strongly favour [l] in HB as well.

BP shares the third salient constraint “grammatical person of the subject” with HB. But the effects of this constraint in the two languages are not same. In BP, subjects with every grammatical person, except third person singular subject, prefer the use of [l]. The third person singular subject shows more use of [s] than [l]. But in HB, third person subjects both plural and singular favour [s].

Negation turns out to be the fourth significant constraint affecting variability in past tense marking in BP. [s] is strongly favoured in negative sentences, whereas [l] is slightly more preferred in affirmative sentences. This constraint did not turn out to be statistically significant for HB. The probabilities of [l] and [s] for this factor group as in table 3.12, however, indicate that negative sentences in HB also demonstrate a little preference for [s]. But it is not as strong as BP.

The next linguistic constraint on past tense markers [l ~ s] in BP is stativity. BP shares this constraint with HB. The effect of stativity on the frequency of the past variants is more or less the same in both BP and HB. Stative verbs prefer [s] to [l] in both the languages in contact, BP and HB. The non-stative verbs display very slight preference for [l]

In BP, past variants [l] and [s] draw a distinction between remote past and the recent past or the immediate past contexts to some extent. But in HB, variants [l ~ s] mark general past and do not specify remoteness distinctions.

From the above discussion it emerges that BP shares the past tense markers with HB, but their distribution in the two language varieties are not same. The nature and effects of linguistic constraints operating on the past tense markers in both these languages are not synonymous. The findings of quantitative analysis suggest that even

though BP and HB have common past tense markers and share some characteristics of these past markers, the underlying grammar operating on the past markers in the two, BP and HB differ in many important respects.

Apart from the comparison of BP and HB, the statistical analysis also demonstrated that [l] and [s] are in inverse relationship in BP. The variant [l] is favoured over [s] by a majority of the linguistic constraints that were examined for the past variants. And the few constraints, which do not prefer [l], are the ones which favour [s]. Now, the nature of the constraints favouring [s] suggests that even though [s] marks past in BP, the undercurrents of perfect still remains in [s].[12] For instance, proximate situations have a favourable effect on [s] as opposed to [l] in BP. The relationship between perfect and immediacy has been reported in literature (Comrie 1976). In the HB data, preference for [s] in immediate situations is not seen. Negative sentences are also more marked by [s]. The negative sentences are incomplete events even in the current time. Negation is reported to atelicize, generating a continuative effect and therefore is more compatible with perfect (See Schwenter and Cacoullos 2008). Apart from negative sentences, relative clauses and interrogative clauses also show preference for [s] in BP. Schwenter and Cacoullos (2008) assert that the perfect should favour the relative clause, interrogative clause and negated statement. This is because the relative clause encodes background information and the perfect also present background information relevant to current time, and secondly nuances of perfect situation are found particularly in assertive contexts as in negation and questions. Thus, it can be said that ambiguity between past and perfect are property of [s] as opposed to [l] in BP.

### 3. 3 Aspect

The aspect category is represented by the imperfective in BP. A total of 3082 tokens of imperfectives were examined in the quantitative analysis in this study. The corpus of imperfectives (in BP) used in this study constitutes 72.5% (N= 2237/3082) of habitual and 27.4% (N= 845/3082) of the progressive verbs (See table 3.13).

| ***Imperfective*** | | **[r]** | **[Ø]** | **[l]** | **[t]** | **[s]** | **[te-s]** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Habitual* | N | 1721 | 208 | 169 | 118 | 21 | - | 2237 |
| | % | 76.9 | 9.2 | 7.5 | 5.2 | 0.9 | - | 72.5 |
| *Progressive* | N | 818 | - | - | - | 14 | 13 | 845 |
| | % | 96.8 | - | - | - | 1.6 | 1.5 | 27.4 |
| *Total* | N | 2535 | 208 | 169 | 118 | 35 | 17 | 3082 |
| | % | 82.2 | 6.7 | 5.4 | 3.8 | 1.1 | 0.5 | |

*Table 3.13 Distribution of the habitual and progressive markers in BP*

Table 3.13 shows that the imperfective categories are denoted by [*r, Ø, l, t, s, te-s*] in BP. The imperfective variants were coded for three linguistic factors and the distributional analysis indicated that different linguistic factors condition the choice of variants across the imperfective categories. Therefore, the variants representing different imperfective categories (habitual, past habitual, present progressive) were recoded for a different set of linguistic factors. The following sections provide a quantitative analysis of the different imperfective categories and delineation of the linguistic factors that trigger the frequency and choice of one variant over the other across the different imperfective categories in BP. In HB, we do not find any variability in the marking of imperfective category. Therefore the discussion on imperfective category will be limited to BP only.

### 3.3.1 (Habitual): [r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s]

The aspectual category of habitual constitutes the major chunk (61.2%) of the instances of imperfectives in BP. This category is designated by a range of variants [r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s] as illustrated in (23)-(26). The distribution of the variants as shown in table 3.14 suggests that the variant [r] alone expresses a majority of the instances of habitual verbs. This is followed by [Ø], which designates only 11% (N= 208) tokens of habitual verbs. The other two variants [l] and [s] merely express very few instances of the habitual verbs.

| ***Habitual*** | **[r]** | **[Ø]** | **[l]** | **[s]** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *N* | 1625 | 208 | 37 | 18 | 1888 |
| *%* | 86 | 11 | 1.9 | 0.9 | |

*Table 3.14 Distribution of habitual variants in BP*

Distributional analysis yielded that 14 out of 49 speakers do not show variability in marking present habitual category.[13] These speakers show a categorical use of the variant [r]. The tokens of these speakers were therefore not included in the multivariate analysis. Therefore, though there were 1625 tokens of [r] (See table 3.14), only 1438 tokens could be used in the multivariate analysis.

**(23)** ***Example of the variant [r]***

nikkaa din mi dau-re **homaa- de-u-r-i**
every day ISg god-Dat respect-give-I-Hab-i
Everyday I worship God. (Arun)

**(24)** ***Example of the variant [Ø]***

ou-go-y naau **paa-kor-e-Ø**
Det-Cl-Nom Neg read-do-III-Hab
He does not study. (Vijaya)

**(25)** ***Example of the variant [l]***

Šiva-raatri-th aastaa din-haan brat raakh-taa-r-aa
Shiva-ratri-in whole day-Cl fast keep-Cl-Hab-III
They fast the whole day in *Shivaratri*.[14]

je nuaar-taa-r-aa
Rel Neg-Can-Cl-Hab-III
Those who cannot (fast).

o-taa-y dupara niraamiš **kei-l-aa**
Det-Cl-Nom afternoon vegetarian-food eat- Hab-III
They eat vegetarian food in the afternoon. (Gauri)

**(26)** ***Example of the variant [s]***

dim rašun maaŋšo te naau **kaa-s-i**
egg garlic meat Emph Neg eat-Hab-I
We do not eat egg, garlic and meat. (Gauri)

The habitual variants were coded for two linguistic factors (i) patterns of language use and (ii) generic/non-generic.

**(I) Patterns of language use**

"Patterns of language use" which encompasses the total verbal repertoire of the Bishnupriyas as illustrated in (27)-(29), was examined for the habitual variants as well. The distribution of habitual variants as in table 3.15 indicates that only [r] and [Ø] show variability across the three kinds of data. The other two variants [l] and [s] occur in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data only. Thus, only the tokens of [r] and [Ø] were evaluated in the multivariate analysis.

| | | **BP** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Patterns of Language Use*** | | **[r]** | **[l]** | **[Ø]** | **[s]** | **Total** |
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | N | 1616 | 37 | 29 | 18 | 1700 |
| | % | 95 | 2.1 | 1.7 | 1 | |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | N | 5 | - | 59 | - | 64 |
| | % | 7.8 | - | 92.1 | - | |
| *Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | N | 4 | - | 120 | - | 124 |
| | % | 3.2 | - | 96.7 | - | |

*Table 3.15 Frequency of habitual variants in BP*

| | BP | | HB |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Factor Group*** | **Probability** | **Probability** | **Frequency** |
| ***(I) Patterns of Language Use*** | **[r]** | **[Ø]** | **[Ø]** |
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | 0.71 | 0.25 | - |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | 0.00 | 0.99 | 100% |
| *Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | 0.00 | 1.00 | - |

*Table 3.16 Habitual variants [r]and [Ø] for patterns of language use in BP*

The linguistic constraint patterns of language use turned out to be significant for both [r] and [Ø]. The result of the multivariable program cited in table 3.16 demonstrates a linguistic patterning of the present habitual variants across the three linguistic codes (L1, L2 and C-S) of the Bishnupriyas. Though there is alternation between [r] and [Ø] in the three linguistic codes as shown in table 3.15, [r] is predominantly used in L1. The other two codes are being categorically encoded by [Ø]. We have seen in Chapter II that in HB, the present habitual category is indicated by [Ø] only. The distribution of [r] and [Ø] indicates a differentiation of Bishnupriya monolingual code (L1) from the L2 and bilingual switches (C-S). The L2 and bilingual repertoire show a shift in the direction of HB. Nevertheless, the emergence of 29 tokens of [Ø] in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data on one hand, and [r] (though very few) in the Bengali monolingual (L2) data (N=5) and in the code-switched data (N=4) on the other side may be an indication of new change triggered by Bishnupriya-Bengali bilingualism.

**(27)** ***Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data*** **[r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s]**

(i) Haailaakaandi-th aai-le mo-r gar-e **aa-i-r-i**
Hailakandi-Loc come-when ISg-Gen house-Loc come-III-Hab-i
She comes to my house whenever she comes to Hailakandi. (Gita)

(ii) u-go bæṭiŋ u baliŋ u hobbaa **kor-e- Ø**
Det-Cl batting also balling also good do-III- Hab
He bats as well as bowls well. (Mohitush)

(iii) maalok- baapok u-taa BA paaš mæṭrik paaš
mother-father Det-Cl BA pass matric pass
The parents are graduates, matriculates.

kintu sau- go-re naau **baagaai-l-aa**
but child-Cl-Dat Neg teach- Hab-III
But (they) do not teach their children. (Satyendra)

(iv) šabji kei-aa-r baaro maaŋšo te naau **kaa-s-i** naay
vegetable eat-I-Hab but meat Emph Neg eat-Hab-I okay
We eat vegetable but we do not eat meat okay. (Gauri)

**(30)** ***Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data*** **[r ~ Ø]**

(i) *aamraa-r šomaaj-e ei-rokom u aas-e sele*
IPl-Gen society-Loc Det-type also Be-III boy

*ei- rokom poraašunaa* ***kor-e-r***
Det-type studies do-III-Hab
Such boys, who study hard are there in our society as well. (Padma)

(ii) *aamraa šobšomoy ou raastaa diyaa* ***jaa -i- Ø***
IPl always Det road by go-I- Hab
We always go by this road.

*kunošomoy oinno raastaa diyaa* ***jaa-i-Ø***
sometimes other road by go-I- Hab
Sometimes we go by the other road. (Pravin)

**(31)** ***Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data*** **[r ~ Ø]**

(i) gaaŋ- ar- o- go- r- aaŋta hadzak aan-iyaa kei-yaa
village-Gen-Det-Cl-Gen-Abl medicine bring-Pcpl eat-Pcpl
Having brought and taken medicines from the village quack.

[*emne* ***biš*** ***de-r*** *naa*] te nei
as such pain give-Hab Neg so Neg
As such (it) does not give any pain, so it is not there. (Lilavati)

(ii) [*sele u kaali gur-te* ***tak-e-Ø***
boy also only roam-Pcpl keep-III- Hab

*i-ʈaa aami* ***pacanda-kor-i-Ø*** *naa*]
Det-Cl ISg like-do-I- Hab Neg
Boys only loiter, I don't like this.

mi te u-haan nuŋei nau pei-r-i
ISg Emph Det-Cl good Neg get-Hab-i
I don't like this. (Sandya)

**(II) Generic sentence**

The other linguistic factor, which was coded for the habitual variants in the multivariate analysis, is "generic/non-generic". Generic sentences according to Dahl (1985:99), "describe the typical or characteristic properties of a species, a kind, or an individual." Generics occur in BP in narratives relating to the customary or religious practices like description of marriages, rituals, preparation of any food and daily activities. Despite the variability between four variants [r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s] in the habitual category, only two variants [r] and [Ø] were submitted to the multivariate analysis for this factor group as well. The reasons are (i) the variant [l] (N=37) occurs in generic context only and (ii) the instances of [s] were very few. Moreover, 8 out of 18 tokens of variant [s] are used with the verb stem *sal* "manage, run", and 6 out of these 8 tokens of verb *sal* are produced by a single informant.

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(II) Generic*** | **[r]** | **[Ø]** | **[s]** | **[l]** |
| *Generic* | 0.13 | 0.56 | 11% (N= 2) | 100% (N=37) |
| *Non-Generic* | 0.59 | 0.48 | 89% (N=16) | - |

*Table 3.17 The effect of generic/non-generic on habitual variants in BP*

*Percentage is given as the probabilities of [l] and [s] could not be obtained

The result of statistical analysis as in table 3.17 suggests that the non-generic contexts select [r] more, whereas the generic contexts stridently disfavour it. The categorical use of [l] in generic contexts probably accounts for the low presence of [r] in these contexts. It is to be noted that 16 out of 18 tokens of [s] mark non-generic, suggesting the preference for [s] in non-generic sentences. Generic and non-generic distinctions affect linguistic patterning of present habitual variants in BP. The variant [l] is used in generic, whereas [r] and [s] are employed more in non-generic sentences. The data of the fourteen speakers who show categorical use of [r] comprises of only non-generic contexts. However, the generic/non-generic distinction is irrelevant for [Ø] as it occurs primarily in L2 and code-switched data that almost lacks variability in marking (See table 3.16).

**(32)** ***Generic*** **[l ~ r ~ Ø ~ s]**

(i) šaat-ṭaa-th uṭ-iyaa gi-yaa taa-re **uṭ-aai-l-u**
seven-Cl-at wake-Pcpl go-Pcpl IIISg-Masc-Dat wake-Caus- Hab-I
Having woke up at seven, I wake him up.

uṭaan e-haan baala kor-iyaa phur-aani laage-r haante…
porch Det-Cl good do-Pcpl sweep-Inf need-Hab as
I have to sweep the porch nicely so…

tei šaat-ṭaa-th **uṭ-i-l** mi u šaat-ṭaa-th **uṭ-l-u**
IIISg-Fem seven-Cl-at wake-i-Hab ISg also seven-Cl-at wake-Hab-I
She wakes up at seven, I also wake up at seven. (Sunil)

(ii) biyaa-r aage heiciŋ **kor-taa-r-aa**
marriage-Gen before heiciŋ do-Cl- Hab-III
*Heiciŋ* is celebrated before marriage. (Anu)

(iii) *Hindu-raa biyaa-r din paarṭi-* ***kor-e-Ø***
Hindu-Pl marriage-Gen day party-do-III-Hab
The Hindus party on the day of marriage. (Debobala)

(iv) **š**abji kei-aa-r baaro maaŋšo te naau **kaa-s-i** naay
vegetable eat-I- Hab but meat Emph Neg eat-Hab-I DM
We eat vegetable but we do not eat meat, okay. (Gauri)

**(33)** ***Non-Generic*** **[r ~ Ø ~ s]**

(i) tei-re *šobšomoy* šaar-e **baagaa-de-r** mi loge **taa-u-r-i**
IIISg-Fem-Dat always sir-Nom inform-give-Hab ISg with stay-I-Hab-i
Private tutor always teaches her, I stay along. (Padma)

(ii) taa Maaiboŋ-e caakri **kor-e-Ø**
IIISg-Masc Maibong-Loc job do-III-Hab
He works in Maibong. (Preeti)

(iii) ebaakaa te gaari salaasal **kor-e-s-e**
now Emph car movement do-e- Hab-III
At present car moves in our village. (Pravin)

### 3.3.1.1 Analysis

The variability in the habitual category in BP is conditioned by only two linguistic factors: (i) patterns of language use and (ii) generic and non-generic distinction. The variant [Ø] is conditioned by patterns of language use. Bishnupriyas use [Ø] primarily in their L2 and the Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches, which is in line with the HB

pattern of habitual marking. The other three variants [l], [r], [s] are conditioned by generic and non-generic distinctions. [l] occurs only in a subset of present habitual category, that is, those which refer to generic contexts. All the other present habitual sentences are referred to as non-generic. The non-generic favour [r] and [s]. This suggests a split between generic and non-generic contexts in BP habitual category.

### 3.3.2 (Past Habitual): [l ~ r ~ t ~ s]

The past habitual category represents 11.3% of the total instances of imperfectives in BP (table 3.18). 349 tokens of past habitual were tested in the multivariate analysis. Imperfectives are conveyed by three competing variants [l], [r] and [t] in BP as shown in (34)-(37).

**(34)** ***Example of [l]***

aagekaa-r jelei-e phuti koti **bun-l-aa**
earlier-Gen women-Nom clothes much weave-Pst Hab-III
Women in earlier days used to weave lots of clothes. (Anu)

**(35)** ***Example of [t]***

mi klaas-e taanaa lekcaar e-haan nau **di-t-u**
ISg class-Loc long lecture Det-Cl Neg give-Pst Hab-I
I used to never deliver a long lecture in class. (Bojendra)

**(36)** ***Example of [r]***

upeit dek-l-aaŋ imaa-r goze niyaam oittaasaar **kor-taa-r-aa**
then see-Pst-I mother-Gen on much torture do-Cl-Pst Hab-III
At that time I saw (they) used to torture my mother very much. (Bojendra)

**(37)** ***Example of [s]***

pratekk din o-go-r **kil -kaa-s-i**
every day Det-Cl-Gen punch -eat-Pst Hab-I
I used to be beaten by him everyday. (Gauri)

| ***Past Habitual*** | **[l]** | **[t]** | **[r]** | **[s]** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***N*** | 132 | 118 | 96 | 3 | 349 |
| ***%*** | 37.8 | 33.8 | 27.5 | 0.8 | |

*Table 3.18 Distribution of past habitual variants in BP*

Table 3.18 reveals that the highest number of verbs denoting past habitual meaning is marked by [l], closely followed by [t] and [r]. The variant [s] accounts for less than one percent of the total past habitual verbs. Unlike the (present) habitual category, no single variant dominates the marking in past habitual category. Apart from [s], all the other three variants stand close to each other, that is, the differences between the frequencies of [l], [t] and [r] are slim.

| ***(I) Patterns of Language Use*** | | **[l]** | **[r]** | **[t]** | **[s]** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | N | 132 | 96 | 89 | 03 | 320 |
| | % | 41.2 | 30 | 27.8 | 0.9 | 91.6 |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | N | - | - | 13 | - | 13 |
| | % | - | - | 100 | - | 3.7 |
| *Bishnupriya to Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | N | - | - | 16 | - | 16 |
| | % | - | - | 100 | - | 4.5 |

*Table 3.19 Frequency of past habitual variants across the patterns of language use in BP*

As far as the factor group "patterns of language use" is concerned, [l], [r] and [s] appear in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data alone. Only the variant [t] occur in all the three kinds of codes considered under patterns of language use as illustrated in (38)-(40). HB with which BP is in contact uses only a single marker [t] for past habitual. Table 3.19 indicates that while [l], [r], [s] occur in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data alone, [t] which is attested in HB, shows up in Bishnupriya-Bengali code-switched data and the Bengali monolingual (L2) data of the Bishnupriyas. The presence of [t] in L2 and code-switched data is categorical.

**(38)** ***Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data***

aami aaksaaṭe kriketṭ **kel-t-aaŋ**
IPl together cricket play-Pst Hab-I
We used to play cricket together. (Raju)

**(39)** ***Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data***

*sele-raa* ***digdaari - di-t-o*** *taai-re*
boy-Pl problem- give-Pst Hab-III IIISg-Fem-Acc
Boys used to harass her. (Raju)

**(40)** ***Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data***

[*hi-šamay-ath šir-le pore šilaay kor-iyaa i-ṭaa* ***laagaai-t-aam***]
Det-time-Loc tear-if then stitch do-Pcpl Det-Cl put-Pst Hab-I
At that time when (clothes) tore, (we) would stitch it and wear it.

ebaakaa te nuwaa phuti laage-r....
now Emph new clothes need-Hab
Now a days new clothes are needed.... (Padma)

It was difficult to discern any linguistic factor that could possibly trigger the distribution of any past habitual variants in BP. The only factor that seemed meaningful

was the use of the variants with different adverbs. Thus, the past habitual variants were coded for different adverbs.

**(I) Adverbials**

The factor group 'adverbials' comprised of three factors such as (a) Past adverbs (b) Frequency adverbs and (c) No adverbs. The variant [r] is used to indicate habitual as well. So, in order to explore how temporality is determined in the habitual situations indicated by [r], past adverbs were included. The past variant [l] also extends to habitual and therefore, frequency adverbs were included to see whether these provided aspectual connotation to the verb denoting past tense.

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***(I) Adverbials*** | **[l]** | **[r]** | **[t]** |
| *Past Adverbs* | 0.69 | 0.18 | 0.46 |
| *Frequency Adverbs* | 0.87 | 0.07 | 0.34 |
| *No Adverbs* | 0.44 | 0.36 | 0.51 |

*Table 3.20 Probability of [l], [r] and [t] for adverbials in BP*

However, this factor group 'adverbial' did not turn out to be significant in affecting the selection of any of the past habitual variants in BP (See table 3.20).[15] The distribution of the different factors (past adverbs, frequency adverbs and no adverbs) as shown in table 3.21 also does not indicate any linguistic patterning of past habitual variants conditioned by adverbials.

Table 3.21 indicates that a majority of both the frequency adverbs as well as the past adverbs occur with [l]. There is very sparse occurrence of frequency adverbs and past adverbs with the other three variants [t ~ r ~ s]. But the pattern of distribution of the "no adverbs" (indeterminate) is different from the pattern revealed by the frequency

adverbs and past adverbs. The differences between the frequencies of “no adverbs” with the various past habitual variants are only marginal, and do not indicate any trend.

| Variants | | Frequency Adverb | Past Adverb | No Adverb | Total (N) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **[l]** | N | 14 | 18 | 100 | 132 |
| | % | 73.6 | 62% | 33.2 | |
| **[r]** | N | 1 | 5 | 90 | 96 |
| | % | 5.2 | 17.2 | 29.9 | |
| **[t]** | N | 3 | 6 | 109 | 118 |
| | % | 15.7 | 20.6 | 36.2 | |
| **[s]** | N | 1 | - | 2 | 3 |
| | % | 5.2 | - | 0.6 | |
| **Total** | | 19 | 29 | 301 | 349 |

*Table 3.21 Distribution of adverbs with the past habitual variants in BP*

The occurrence of [t], [r] and [l] with past adverbs and frequency adverbs is low. All the three past habitual variants appear maximally with “no adverbs” and are therefore indeterminate. The low frequency of the use of past adverbs and the frequency adverbs with the past habitual variants and their pattern of distribution do not indicate any significant role of the temporal adverbs in conditioning the selection of any particular variant. The past habitual variants [l ~ r ~ t ~ s] are compatible with adverbs but the presence of adverb is not required. However, the fact that the highest number of frequency adverbs occur with [l] may tempts us to think that since it is a tense marker, frequency adverbs are used to reinforce aspectual connotation. The other variants [r] and [t] are aspectual markers and do not require any other support. But the fact that both frequency adverbs and past adverbs occur with [l] more, and on the other hand the highest numbers of instances of [l] also occur with no adverbs rules out any hypothesis. This only suggests that [l] is compatible with both past and habitual.

### 3.3.2.1 Analysis

The variation between [l ~ t ~ r ~ s] in the past habitual category is in the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data only. The other two codes (L2 and C-S) use [t] only, and thereby adhere strictly to the HB pattern. Apart from patterns of language use, it is difficult to determine any other plausible linguistic constraint which might have any role in conditioning the variability in the past habitual marking in BP.

The variants that convey past habitual meaning occur with both frequency and past adverbs. Nevertheless, a majority of past habitual situations occur without any temporal specifications. Discourse cues play a pivotal role in connoting additional temporal meaning to such habitual situations.

### 3.3.3 (Present Progressive): [r ~ s ~ te-s]

The present progressive category constitutes 18.5% of the imperfectives (in our corpus) in BP. A total of 572 tokens of verbs encoding present progressive situations were analysed in this study. The present progressive category in BP is assigned by three variants [r], [s] or [te-s] as demonstrated in (41)-(43).

**(41)** ***Example of [r]***

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| to-r | banak-e | dau-r | yaari | **de-i-r-i** |
| IISg-Gen | sister-Nom | God-Gen | story | give-III-Pres Prog-i |

Your sister is telling stories relating to God. (Konika)

**(42)** ***Example of [s]***

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| hukaaŋ | sau-o-taa-y | raas-e-haan | **kor-e-s-i-go** |
| small | children-Det-Cl-Nom | Rasa-Lila-Det-Cl | do-e-Pres Prog-III-Cl |

These small children are performing in a *Rasa lila*. (Urmila)

**(43)** ***Example of [te-s]***

*aaste aaste* ***koi-te-s-i*** *he maane kub durbal*
slowly slowly say-Pcpl-Pres Prog-I IIISg-Masc means very weak
I am telling you slowly he is very weak. (Renu)

| ***Present Progressive*** | **[r]** | **[s]** | **[te-s]** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***N*** | 545 | 14 | 13 | 572 |
| ***%*** | 95.2 | 2.4 | 2.2 | |

*Table 3.22 Distribution of Present Progressive variants in BP*

The frequencies of the present progressive markers provided in table 3.22 suggest that the verbs encoding present progressive meaning are indicated essentially by the variant [r]. There is a very small presence of other variants such as [s] and [te-s]. The variant [r] is found to encode present progressive category in HB in the corpus gathered for this study. Though the variant [te-s] has been attested as a progressive marker in eastern Bengali, it did not surface in the HB data (See Chapter II).

| ***(I) Patterns of Language Use*** | **[r]** | | **[s]** | | **[te-s]** | | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **N** | **%** | **N** | **%** | **N** | **%** | |
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | 513 | 97.3 | 14 | 2.6 | - | - | 527 |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | 12 | 57.1 | - | - | 9 | 42.8 | 21 |
| *Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | 20 | 83.3 | - | - | 4 | 16.6 | 24 |
| *Total* | 545 | | 14 | | 13 | | 572 |

*Table 3.23 [r ~ s ~ te-s] across patterns of language use*

The distribution of present progressive markers across the patterns of language use as shown in table 3.23 suggests that [r] dominates in all codes of the Bishnupriyas. However, a few tokens of [s] alternate with [r] in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data alone. In L2 and in the code-switched data, [r] alternates with [te-s]. The great disparity between the frequency of [r] and the other two variants [s] or [te-s] demonstrate that there is very limited variability in present progressive category in BP.

**(44)** ***Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data*** **[r ~ s]**

(i) buri-maa-y phuti **bun-i-r-i-taa**
old-mother-Nom cloth weave-III-Pres Prog-i-Cl
Grand-mother is weaving clothes. (Urmila)

(ii) ti haaru oi-yaa **ṭoṭoraa-s-ot**
IISg happy Be-Pcpl speak-Pres Prog-II
You are speaking happily. (Lilavati)

**(45)** ***Bengali Monolingual (L2) data*** **[r ~ te-s]**

(i) *oi je gaan* ***gaa-r*** *je por-e-Ø naa*
Det Rel song sing-Pres Prog Rel read-III- Hab Neg
The one who is singing (at the moment) does not study. (Renu)

(ii) *aami nije taa-re* ***poraai-te-s-i***
ISg myself IIIMasc-Sg-Dat teach-Pres Prog-I
I am myself teaching him . (Renu)

**(46)** ***Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) data*** **[r ~ te-s]**

(i) [*aami* ***raandi-yaa-r***] ti mo-r putak-ar loge ṭoṭoraa
ISg cook-I-Pres Prog IISg ISg-Gen son-Gen with speak-Imp
I am cooking, you chat with my son. (Deven)

(ii) [*ikaane ..* ***kor-te-s-i*** *cikiššaa* ***kor-te-s-i***
here do-Pcpl-Pres Prog-I treatment do-Pcpl-Pres Prog-I

*homiopaati ek-ṭaa fizišiaan -er kaache*]
homeopathic one-Cl physician-Gen near
I am taking treatment from a homeopathic doctor here,

haante mi ebaakaa gar-e aai-l-u
so ISg now home-Loc come-Pst-I
so at present I am at home . (Deven)

### 3.4 Aspect: An Overview

The imperfective marking in BP demonstrates ample variability, and deviates from the HB pattern of marking. Despite the differences in the pattern of aspect marking in the two language varieties, there are forms which overlap in both the systems.

The habitual category in BP demonstrates four-way [r ~ l ~ Ø ~ s] pattern of marking. Variability in this category is conditioned by two linguistic factors: (i) patterns of language use and (ii) generic and non-generic distinction. The variant [Ø], which is the HB form, is conditioned largely by patterns of language use. This variant is largely used in L2 and the Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched discourses. The other three variants [r ~ l ~ s] appear in L1 speech. Moreover, these forms also draw a split between the generic and the non-generic sentences. The variant [l] is stipulated by generic sentences alone. The other two variants [r] and [s] occur in both generic and non-generic sentences. But these two forms are more preferred in non-generic sentences.

In the past habitual category, it is only the patterns of language use that affects the frequency of the variants [l ~ r ~ t ~ s] in BP. The HB past habitual marker [t] occurs across the patterns of language use (L1, L2 and C-S) of the Bishnupriyas. The other three variants [l], [r] and [s] surface in L1 data alone.

The present progressive category in BP shows the predominance of the HB progressive marker [r] across the three patterns of language use. However, [r] faces a little alternation from [s] in L1, and on the other hand from [te-s] in L2 and code-

switched data.

The results of statistical analysis of the imperfective categories have shown that variability in these categories (especially in the habitual) is primarily in the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data of the Bishnupriyas. The L2 and code-switched data of the Bishnupriyas show a pattern of shift towards the local Bengali, that is, the HB pattern. The presence of many variants in BP is rooted in the history of language contact, out of which BP emerged. The variant [l] which has been attested as past tense marker in Bengali in general has been reallocated both tense and aspect functions in BP. [l] apart from indicating past tense, also signifies generic (habitual) and past habitual in BP. The variant [s] pervades through all the imperfective categories both habitual and progressive. But in HB with which BP is in contact, [s] functions as past tense marker only. It is reiterated that though [s] has been attested as a perfect marker in Bengali in general, the progressive attributes of [s] in Standard Bengali has been noticed as well (Chatterjee 1926).[16] The variant [r], which has been attested as a progressive marker in Eastern Bengali, marks progressive situations in HB as well. But in BP data [r] conflates progressive and habitual. The form [te-s], which indicates progressive meaning in many Eastern Bengali varieties, however does not occur in HB data. A few instances of [te-s] show up in BP progressive situations. The (general) Bengali past habitual form [t] marks past habitual situations in BP along with other forms. Many of the variable forms in BP are continuities from earlier language contact and are restricted to Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech. But when the Bishnupriyas switch to HB or interact in HB, they resort to the HB imperfective forms, most of which occur in other varieties of Eastern Bengali. These forms, such as, [Ø] (habitual), [t] (past habitual), [r] (progressive), however, appear in L1 data as well. But unlike BP, the marking of imperfective categories in HB lacks variability.

### 3.5 (Irrealis): [t ~ b ~ ŋ ~ m]

Mood (Irrealis) in BP shows variability in marking. The analysis of irrealis category is based on a total of 1726 tokens of [t], [b], [ŋ] and [m], of which 1447 tokens are from BP

and 279 tokens are from HB. As there were very few instances of counterfactuals in our data, this category was not included in the quantitative analysis. Table 3.24 provides the frequencies of the irrealis variants in BP and HB data.

| ***Context*** | **BP** | | | | **HB** | | | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(Irrealis)*** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[ŋ]** | **[m]** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[m]** | |
| ***N*** | 1279 | 81 | 71 | 16 | 115 | 105 | 59 | 1726 |
| ***%*** | 88.4 | 5.6 | 4.9 | 1.1 | 41.2 | 37.6 | 21.6 | |

*Table 3.24 Distribution of irrealis variants in BP and HB*

The irrealis mood variants in BP and HB were coded for four linguistic factors shown in table 3.25 to ascertain their role in conditioning the frequency and selection of one variant over the other. A comparison between BP and HB linguistic constraints on irrealis forms is provided in the following discussion, which will allow us to assess the relationship between BP irrealis category and the HB irrealis category.

| ***Linguistic Factors*** | **[t]** | | **[b]** | | **[ŋ]** | | **[m]** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Significant** | | **Significant** | | **Significant** | | **Significant** | |
| | **BP** | **HB** | **BP** | **HB** | **BP** | **HB** | **BP** | **HB** |
| *(i) Patterns of language use* | Yes | - | Yes | - | - | - | - | - |
| *(ii) Grammatical person of the subject* | - | No | No | No | - | - | - | - |
| *(iii) Nature of the situation* | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | - | - | Yes |
| *(iv) Negation* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | - | - | - |

*Table 3.25 Constraints operating in Irrealis Mood category in BP and HB*

I would now discuss the role of the four factor groups (as in table 3.25) individually in conditioning the irrealis variants in BP and HB. These linguistic factors are:

**(I) Patterns of language use**

The factor group "patterns of language use" was included to study whether the choice of variants in the irrealis mood categories in BP was conditioned by bilingualism. Distributional analysis shows that the variants [t] and [b] occur in all the three kinds of codes (L1, L2, C-S) of the Bishnupriyas as in (47)-(49). The variant [ŋ], however, appears in L1 only as illustrated in (47iii), and [m] appears only in L2 and BP to HB code-switched data as in (48iii) and (49iii).

**(47)** ***Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data*** **[t ~ b ~ ŋ]**

(i) mi mo-r jilak-o-go-re soraa-aag-go **di-t-u**
ISg ISg-Gen daughter-Det-Cl-Dat necklace-one-Cl give-Irr-I
I will give my daughter a necklace. (Debobala)

(ii) Raas-haan **cei-b-e-gaa**
Rasa-Cl see-Irr-II-Cl
(You) will watch the *Rasa lila*. (Urmila)

(iii) mi buraa-baabaa-r loge **gunj-iŋ**
ISg old- father-Gen with sleep-Irr
I will sleep with grand-father. (Milan)

**(48)** ***Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data*** **[t ~ b ~ m]**

(i) *ekon ta tumi* ***cin-t-aay*** *naa*
now Emph IISg recognize-Irr-II Neg
Now you will not recognize me. (Raju)

(ii) *he dukaan ek-ʈaa* ***di-b-o***
IIISg-Masc shop one-Cl give-Irr-III
He will start a shop. (Renu)

(iii) *aami* ***di-m-u*** *seraa tumaa-re*
ISg give-Irr-I sapling IISg-Dat
I will give you saplings. (Bhawani)

**(49)** ***Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data*** **[t ~ b ~ m]**

(i ) [*kaali aamaa-re dek-le raag- kor-e-Ø*
only ISg-Dat see-if anger- do-III-Hab

*aami hikaano gi-yaa kitaa* ***kor-t-aam***]
ISg there go-Pcpl what do- Irr-I
He gets angry whenever he sees me, what will I do by going there?

mi gi-yaa kitaa kor-t-u-gaa upei buju-r-i-taa..
ISg go-Pcpl what do-Irr-I-Cl there understand-Pres Prog - II-Cl
What will I do by going there? Do you understand? (Gayatri)

(ii) [*ekon graam-e* ***jaai-b-aay***] gaaŋ-e yaam pei-t-e
now village-Loc go-Irr-II, village-Loc much get-Irr-II
Now you will go to the village, (you) will get (a lot of information) in the village.
(Pravin)

(iii) ti haar naa pei-t-ei [*aami* ***di-m-u*** *injekšon*]
IISg know Neg get-Irr-II ISg give-Irr-I injection
You will not understand, I will give you the injection. (Debobala)

Only the variants [t] and [b] were tested in the multivariate analysis as these two variants appear in all the three patterns of language use of the Bishnupriyas. The results of statistical analysis as in table 3.26 indicate that [t] and [b] are used to distinguish the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code from the L2 or bilingual code-switches. The L1 shows preference for [t], whereas L2 and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches strongly favour the use of [b]. Secondly, [ŋ] and [m] separate L1 from L2 and Bishnupriya-

Bengali code-switches as [ŋ] occurs in Bishnupriya monolingual data (L1) alone, whereas [m] occurs in Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data, which is in line with the HB pattern.[17]

| ***(I) Patterns of Language Use*** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[ŋ]** | **[m]** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | 0.61 | 0.18 | 5.4% | - |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | 0.03 | 0.97 | - | 12% |
| *Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | 0.02 | 0.99 | - | 10% |

*Table 3.26 [t], [b], [ŋ] and [m] for patterns of language use in BP*

| ***Factor Group*** | | **BP** | | | | **HB** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(I) Patterns of Language Use*** | | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[ŋ]** | **[m]** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[m]** |
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | N | 1226 | 5 | 71 | - | - | - | - |
| | % | 94.1 | 0.3 | 5.4 | - | - | - | - |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | N | 14 | 21 | - | 5 | 115 | 105 | 59 |
| | % | 35 | 52.5 | - | 12.5 | 41.2 | 37.6 | 21.1 |
| *Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S)* | N | 39 | 55 | - | 11 | - | - | - |
| | % | 37.1 | 52.3 | - | 10.4 | - | - | - |

*Table 3.27 Irrealis mood variants in BP and HB*

The Bishnupriyas use [b] more in their L2 and code-switches, even though HB does not display any such preference (see table 3.27). Table 3.27 indicates that [t] and [b] stand close to each other in HB, but not in BP.

**(II) Grammatical person of subject**

A connection between grammatical person of the subject and choice of mood variant exists in BP and HB as we can see in table 3.28 and examples (50)-(55). Table 3.28 shows the subject contexts (grammatical person) where the irrealis variants [t], [b], [ŋ] and [m] occur in BP and HB. However, the variant [ŋ] did not appear in the corpus of HB.

The variant [t] occurs with every grammatical person in both BP and HB. The variant [b] is reserved for second and third person subject contexts. However, no instances of [b] were found with second person plural subjects in the BP data. [m] and [ŋ] occur with first person subject contexts alone. The distribution of [m] and [ŋ] suggest that [m] is realized as [ŋ] with first person singular subjects in L1. The Tibeto-Burman practice of velarizing nasal is common in BP (Laskar 2003a).

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | | | **HB** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(II) Grammatical Person of Subject*** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[ŋ]** | **[m]** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[m]** |
| *I Person Singular* | √ | × | √ | √ | √ | × | √ |
| *II Person Singular* | √ | √ | × | × | √ | √ | × |
| *III Person Singular* | √ | √ | × | × | √ | √ | × |
| *I Person Plural* | √ | × | × | √ | √ | × | √ |
| *II Person Plural* | √ | × | × | × | √ | √ | × |
| *III Person Plural* | √ | √ | × | × | √ | √ | × |

*Table 3.28 Irrealis variants and Grammatical Person of Subject in BP and HB*

**(50)** ***First Person Singular Subject*** **[t ~ ŋ ~ m]**

(i) mi iskul-ar yaari **di-t-u**
ISg school-Gen story give-Irr-I
I will tell you stories of my school. (Dipti)

(ii) mi ʈɛsʈ parikkaa **di-ŋ**
ISg test exam give-Irr
I will take the test. (Mohitush)

(iii) *nɛksʈ yiaar aami maasʈaar raak-iyaa* ***dilaai-m-u***
next year ISg teacher keep-Pcpl give-Irr-I
I will keep a tutor (for him) next year. (Renu)

**(51)** ***Second Person Singular Subject*** **[t ~ b]**

(i) upeit ge-le haabi haar -**pei-t-e**
there-Loc go-if all know-get-Irr-II
If you go there you will know everything. (Janki)

(ii) Raas-haan **cei-b-e-gaa**
Rasa-Cl watch-Irr-II-Cl
(You) will watch the *Rasa lila*. (Urmila)

**(52)** ***Third Person Singular Subject*** **[t ~ b]**

(i) daadaa-y **haar-pei-t-o** mo-r yaari o-taa
brother-Nom know-get-Irr-III ISg-Gen story Det-Cl
(My) brother will know my story. (Anu)

(ii) *he iŋliš-e enʈrens-ʈaa* ***di-b-o***
IIISg-Masc English-in entrance-Cl give-Irr-III
He will take the entrance examination in English. (Renu)

**(53)** ***First Person Plural Subject*** **[t ~ m]**

(i) aami haabi miliyaa raas- lilaa-e-haan **kor-t-aaŋ**
IPl all together Rasa-Lila -Det-Cl do-Irr-I
We will organize a *Rasa lila* together. (Indra)

(ii) *kaalke aamraa upabaaš* ***raak-m-u***
tomorrow IPl fast keep-Irr-I
Tomorrow we will keep fast. (Gauri)

**(54)** ***Second Person Plural Subject*** **[t]**

(i) heiciŋ-ar din niŋal-sau-go-r aat-e pušaak **di-t-aay**
*Heicing*-Gen day girl-child-Cl-Gen hand-in dress give-Irr-II
(you all) will give clothes in the girl's hand on the day of *Heicing*. (Anu)

**(55)** ***Third Person Plural Subject*** **[t ~ b]**

(i) hukaaŋ hukaaŋ niŋal-e **naas-t-ai**
small small girl-Nom dance-Irr-III
Small girls will dance. (Namita)

(ii) *aastaa graam-ar maanuš* ***aai-b-o,*** *šob-e aa-iyaa* ***dek-b-o***.
whole village-Gen people come-Irr-III all-Nom come-Pcpl see-Irr-III
People from the entire village will come, all will come and watch. (Preeti)

Only the variants [t] and [b] could be examined for this factor group "grammatical person of the subject" in the multivariate analysis, as the other two variants [ŋ] and [m] appear with first person subject only. This factor group turned out to be significant for the variant [t] alone in BP. Table 3.29, which cites the result of statistical analysis points out that even though [t] occurs with every grammatical person, it is strongly favoured by plural subjects, especially first and second in BP. The only contexts where [t] is not favoured is first person singular subject contexts. Perhaps this is because [ŋ] appears only with first person singular subject. The "grammatical person of the subject" did not have any effect on the presence of [b] which alternates with [t] in second (singular) and third (both singular and plural) subject contexts in BP. Even the probability of [b] for the different subjects (second/third person singular and third person plural) does not signify any pattern.

Formula: t = t/t+b+ŋ+m

b = b/t+b

ŋ = ŋ/t+ŋ+m

m = m/t+ŋ+m

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | | | **HB** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(II) Grammatical Person of Subject*** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[ŋ]** | **[m]** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[m]** |
| *I Person Singular* | 0.34 | - | 12.5% (N=71) | 2.4% (N=14) | 0.44 | - | 59.6% (N=53) |
| *II Person Singular* | 0.59 | 0.49 | - | - | 0.59 | 0.47 | - |
| *III Person Singular* | 0.59 | 0.51 | - | - | 0.57 | 0.43 | - |
| *I Person Plural* | 0.86 | - | - | 3.1% (N=2) | 0.31 | - | 66.7% (N=40) |
| *II Person Plural* | 100%* (N= 43) | - | - | - | 0.61 | 0.54 | - |
| *III Person Plural* | 0.57 | 0.47 | - | - | 0.22 | 0.82 | - |

*Table 3.29 Probabilities of mood variants for grammatical person of subject in BP and HB*

* Frequency is used when probability could not be obtained

The factor group "grammatical person of the subject" did not turn out to be significant for any of the irrealis variants in HB. BP and HB share the same variants, but there are some differences in the internal constraints operating on some of these variants. Unlike BP, where [t] is strongly favoured by plural subjects, the plural subjects (except second person) in HB do not prefer the use of [t]. In HB, the first person plural subjects have more [m] and the third person plural subjects prefer [b] to [t]. However, the singular subjects in both BP and HB show a similar pattern of marking.

**(III) Nature of the situation: hypothetical/certain or definite**

The irrealis mood category in BP includes both hypothetical future situations and certain or definite future situations as illustrated in (56)-(57).

**(56)** ***Hypothetical future situation***

(i) o-haan niŋsiŋ oi-le mi **maat-t-u**
Det-Cl remember Be-if ISg speak-Irr-I
If I remember I will tell you. (Janki)

(ii) *taa-r mur-go kaaraap* ***kor-b-o***
IIISg-Masc-Gen head-Cl bad do-Irr-III
He will destroy his brain. (Java)

(iii) prabu mi sau aag-go **pei-ŋ-ne**!
God ISg child one-Cl get-Irr-Interr
God, will I get a child! (Namita)

(iv) *laau ek-ʈaa curi* ***kor-m-u*** *…baab-s-i*
bottle gourd one-Cl steal do-Irr-I … think-Pst-I
I thought I will steal one bottle gourd. (Urmila)

**(57)** ***Certain future situation***

(i) Haailaakaandi-th maadaan-e **jei-t-o-gaa**
Hailakandi-Loc afternoon-in go-Irr-III-Cl
(She) will go to Hailakandi in the afternoon. (Janki)

(ii) *he aamaa-re kobor* ***di-b-o***
IIISg-Masc ISg-Dat news give-Irr-III
He will inform me. (Renu)

(iii) phon nombor-go **di-ŋ**
phon number-Cl give-Irr
(I ) will give you the phone number. (Debobala)

(iv) *kaalke aami* ***jaai-m-u*** *graam-o*
tomorrow ISg go-Irr-I village-Loc
Tomorrow I will go to the village. (Vibha)

As the irrealis forms [t ~ b ~ ŋ ~ m] indicate both hypothetical and certain or definite future situations, it was necessary to examine whether the distinction between certain and hypothetical was instrumental in conditioning the frequency and choice of variants encoding irrealis mood category in BP. The probabilities and distribution of irrealis forms in the certain and hypothetical situations in BP and HB as shown by the multivariate program are provided in table 3.30.

| **Factor Group** | **BP** | | | | **HB** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(III) Nature of the Situation*** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[ŋ]** | **[m]*** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[m]** |
| *Certain* | 0.25 | 0.28 | 0.83 | 68.7% | 0.39 | 0.76 | 0.75 |
| *Hypothetical* | 0.55 | 0.54 | 0.42 | 31.2% | 0.53 | 0.46 | 0.41 |

*Table 3.30 Probabilities of mood variants for certain/hypothetical situations in BP and HB*

*Probability of [m] in BP could not be obtained, so frequency is given.

The multivariate analysis considered this factor group as a decisive factor in asserting the choice and frequency of [t] and [ŋ + m] in BP. The hypothetical future situations favour [t], whereas the situations that are presumed as certain or definite strongly favour the variant [ŋ] and [m]. Since the variant [ŋ] and [m] occur specifically with the first person subject, it is quite likely that [ŋ] and [m] will occur more in situations that are assumed to be more certain. This is because the first person subjects have more assurance on the possibility of commencement of a situation. Table 3.30 shows that the variant [b] has the same distribution as [t]. But this factor group did not turn out to be significant for the distribution [b].

In HB, this linguistic constraint turned out as salient for [m] only. Nevertheless, comparison of the probabilities as in table 3.30, suggests that the distribution of [t] and [m] in HB is similar to BP. The major distinction between these two varieties exists in the

distribution of [b]. The trend of distribution of [b] in HB is opposed to the pattern displayed by [b] in BP.

**(IV) Negation**

In BP, the negative sentences are near categorically (97%) marked by [t]. In contrast, the affirmative sentences favour [b] and [m + ŋ]. In the corpus used in this study, there are 3 tokens of [ŋ] and 1 token of [b] occurring in negative sentences. There are, however, no instances of the variant [m] in negative sentences. Both BP and HB follow similar pattern with reference to this factor group (See table 3.31).[18]

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | **BP** | **BP** | **BP** | **HB** | **HB** | **HB** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***(IV) Negation*** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[ŋ]** | **[m]** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[m]** |
| *Negative* | 0.95 | 0.01 | 0.26 | - | 0.96 | 0.04 | - |
| *Affirmative* | 0.42 | 0.61 | 0.52 | 100% | 0.43 | 0.55 | 100% |

*Table 3.31 Probabilities of mood variants for negation in BP and HB*

### 3.5.1 Analysis

BP shares the irrealis variants with HB. But the pattern of distribution of the irrealis variants in the two languages differs to a considerable extent (See table 3.24). Despite the variability, the form [t] dominates irrealis marking in BP. The other variants [b] and [ŋ + m] denote only a small percentage of the irrealis situations. But irrealis marking in HB does not demonstrate dominance of one particular variant. The margin between the frequency of [t] and [b] is very insignificant in HB.

The "patterns of language use" is the most salient constraint affecting the variability in the irrealis category as well. The Bishnupriyas associate [t] with

Bishnupriya monolingual speech and [b] with HB speech, that is L2 and code-switches. This finding is interesting, considering the fact, that HB of the Bengalis does not show preference for [b]. In fact [t] is used slightly more than [b] even in HB. The form [ŋ] and [m] are used to separate L1 from L2 and bilingual code-switches with first person subjects. [ŋ] characterizes Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech, whereas [m] which is the HB form epitomizes Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched discourses.

The pattern of distribution of the irrealis forms with respect to the other three linguistic constraints (grammatical person of the subject, hypothetical/certain distinction and negation) in BP and HB reveals both correspondence as well as divergence between the two systems. The distribution of [ŋ/m] in both the languages is more or less same. The form [t] reveals a mixed pattern. For instance, [t] is favoured by every grammatical person (especially the plural subject contexts) but third person singular subjects in BP. But HB does not show this kind of distribution of [t]. Nonetheless, the preference for [t] in hypothetical and negative sentences is seen in both the languages. The maximum divergence between BP and HB is with regard to the distribution of [b].

## Notes

[1] The three, that is, tense, aspect and mood do not co-occur, and the issue of ordering is irrelevant. However, for the purpose of discussion, the category of tense, aspect and mood have been referred in the order they are discussed.

[2] - in tables indicate that a variant is not attested in the given category in the data or does not apply. This would be followed throughout the chapter.

[3] The coding schemes of the linguistic factors are provided in Appendix IV, Part A, B, C, D, and E.

[4] The past progressive and past perfect categories were not analyzed in the multivariate analysis as these two categories lack variability in marking.

[5] The linguistic constraint "patterns of language use" was not applicable for the HB past tense markers. Therefore, there are only six linguistic constraints in HB.

[6] This will be followed throughout the chapter.

[7] Tagliamonte (2006) mentions that literature on quantitative paradigm posit that factor weights over .5 as favouring and those below .5 as disfavouring. She suggests that though it is generally true, it may not be the most accurate way of interpreting the factor weights. So one should rather consider the relative weight of the factor weights *vis a vis* each other.

[8] The temporal distances were measured using the same criterion that was used in Chapter II.

[9] In the conditional-consequent clause, the past tense marking in the consequent clause is considered in the analysis.

[10] Conditionals are considered as adverbial clauses in many studies (See Whaley 1997).

[11] The verbs *pei* 'get', *kor* 'do', *de* 'give' can occur independently as simple verbs as well. In this study, I have included both simple verbs as well as complex verbs in the coding. For instance, the factor *kor* included simple verb 'do' as well as the complex verbs such as *aaŋ-kor* 'ask', *paa- kor* 'read'.

[12] *s* has been attested as a perfect marker in both Bengali (Grierson 1903, Chatterjee 1926) and BP (Sinha 1981).

[13] Please see the discussion on generic/non-generic.

[14] *Shivaratri* is a Hindu festival.

[15] The form *s* was not examined in the multivariate analysis as there were only three tokens of *s* in the past habitual category.

[16] *s* is realized as *ch* in Standard Bengali (See Chatterjee 1926).

[17] The probabilities of [ŋ] and [m] for patterns of language use in BP could not be explored as [ŋ] occurred only in monolingual data and the instances of [m] were very less. Since there were only 16 instances of [m], it was not submitted in the multivariate analysis.

[18] Probability of [m] in BP could not be obtained so frequency is given in table 3.31.

# Chapter - IV

## Bilingualism and TAM in Bishnupriya

### 4.0 Introduction

We have seen in the last chapter that the TAM system in BP displays variability and a number of variants are used to denote the TAM categories. The results of quantitative analysis demonstrated that among the various linguistic constraints, bilingual patterns of language use turned out to be the most significant factor for conditioning variability in the TAM marking in BP. Unlike other constraints, "patterns of language use" is the only factor that was selected as significant for each of the TAM variables discussed in Chapter III. This chapter correlates patterns of language use with other linguistic and social constraints to explore the relationship of patterns of language use with other constraints. This will help in addressing the role of Bishnupriya-Bengali bilingualism in shaping the TAM system of BP. The main focus of this chapter is to look at the ramifications of bilingualism as manifested in the variation in the tense, aspect and mood categories in BP.

### 4.1 TAM and Patterns of Language Use in BP: An Introduction

The distribution of the TAM variants across the variety of linguistic codes of the Bishnupriya speech community sheds light on the fact that variability in TAM marking is closely linked with the different linguistic codes used by the Bishnupriyas. Many of the TAM forms emerge predominantly in the bilingual discourses, such as, code-switches and when the Bishnupriya speakers interact in HB. The focus of current sociolinguistic research on bilingualism is on the different usage patterns of the bilinguals that throws light on the consequences of language contact (See Sankoff 2002). Current research on the phenomenon of bilingualism shows that bilingualism is characterized by code-switching, which may even lead to creation of mixed languages (Auer 1999, Thomason

2003, McConvell 2008). Studies on code-switching draw attention to the ambiguous alternations, where it is difficult to separate one language from the other. These studies also examine whether the languages used in bilingual talks are the same as the languages that are used in monolingual talks (Auer 2007).

Code-switching is an inherent part of the bilingual Bishnupriya speech community in Hailakandi. The analysis in the earlier chapters indicated that BP shares the TAM categories and forms with HB with respect to certain features, but also differs from HB, with regard to some other features of TAM categories and forms that express these categories. The overlapping between BP and HB often makes it difficult to segregate the verbal predicates of the two systems in the code-switches. However, the frequency of the different TAM variants in the different kinds of repertoire of the Bishnupriyas shows how the Bishnupriya speakers make an attempt to separate their monolingual discourses from the bilingual discourses. Cross-tabulation of the TAM markers by patterns of language use and other constraints both linguistic and social reveals that there are differences in the frequencies of the TAM variants in the different kinds of codes that are being used by the bilingual Bishnupriyas. The results of cross-tabulations show that despite the variability in TAM marking, Bishnupriya speakers employ a particular variant predominantly in a specific code. In this chapter, the results of the cross-tabulations between patterns of language use and other constraints are discussed, which will demonstrate how bilingualism affects variation in TAM marking in BP.

## 4.2 Effects of Patterns of Language Use on Past Tense Category in BP

Two variants [l] and [s] are used to indicate past tense marking in BP. However, the past [l] is more preferred in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech, whereas [s] is used more in the Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched (C-S) discourses. The pattern of past tense marking in L2 and bilingual (code-switches) discourses is in line with the HB pattern of past tense marking, where [s] is preferred over [l]. Though the bilingual patterns of language use turned out to be the most significant factor for conditioning variability in past tense marking in BP, there are also other

linguistic factors, which wield some influence in triggering the choice of the past tense variants in BP. Therefore, cross-tabulations of the past variants by the different linguistic factors and patterns of language use were done to explore the effect of patterns of language use on the other linguistic constraints operating in the past tense marking in BP. The findings of the cross-tabulations are discussed in the following:

**(I) Grammatical person of the subject and patterns of language use**

In BP, [l] is preferred with every grammatical person but third person singular subject. The third person singular subject on the other hand favour [s] more (See Chapter III). This linguistic constraint operates in HB with a slight deviation. For instance, in HB third person plural subject also favours [s].

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | | |
| ***(I) Grammatical Person of Subject*** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** |
| *I Person Singular* | 82 | 18 | 42 | 58 | 16 | 84 | 25 | 75 |
| *I Person Plural* | 92 | 08 | 100 (N=2) | - | - | 100 (N=2) | 29 | 71 |
| *II Person Singular* | 73 | 27 | 33 | 67 | 25 | 75 | 28 | 72 |
| *III Person Singular* | 62 | 38 | 35 | 65 | 09 | 91 | 15 | 85 |
| *III Person Plural* | 85 | 15 | - | 100 (N=4) | 25 | 75 | 12 | 88 |

*Table 4.1 [l] and [s] by grammatical person of subject and patterns of language use*

- Data not available[1]

Cross-tabulation of past tense variants [l ~ s] by grammatical person of subject and patterns of language use as represented in table 4.1 indicates that the rate of use of [l] is high with every grammatical person including third person singular in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data alone.[2] In code-switched and L2 data, there is a shift towards

greater use of [s] and reduction in the use of [l]. The pattern of past tense marking in L2 and code-switched data bear resemblance to HB pattern.[3]

Nevertheless, the increase in the use of [s] with third person singular subjects in L1 and the highest use of [s] with third person singular subjects in code-switched data suggest that this constraint interacts with the patterns of language use. Though maximum shift towards the HB is noted in code-switches, the internal hierarchy of constraint in code-switches and HB is not same.

### (II) Degree of remoteness and patterns of language use

BP and HB show mutually opposing patterns with reference to the degree of remoteness. In BP, [l] is associated with remoteness and [s] with immediacy and proximity. In HB, [l] and [s] do not distinguish the degree of remoteness. Distribution of the past variants across the patterns of language use as in table 4.2 shows the dominance of [l] in all the three past contexts in L1 data. Nevertheless, a slight increase in the frequency of [s] in recent past and immediate past is observed.

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | **HB** | **HB** |
| ***(II) Degree of Remoteness*** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** |
| *Remote Past* | 79 | 21 | 58 | 42 | 9 | 91 | 10 | 90 |
| *Recent Past* | 70 | 30 | 37 | 63 | 17 | 83 | 23 | 77 |
| *Immediate Past* | 64 | 36 | 12 | 88 | 13 | 87 | 10 | 90 |

*Table 4.2 [l] and [s] by degree of remoteness and patterns of language use*

In L2, [l] is favoured in remote past contexts, but [s] is used more in the recent past and immediate past contexts. The past variants [l ~ s] clearly distinguish remote past from the recent past and immediate past contexts in Bengali monolingual (L2) data. In

contrast, the code-switched data reflects a complete shift towards [s] in all the past contexts. The pattern of marking in code-switched data is completely in tune with the HB pattern, where there is no remoteness distinction within the past.

**(III) Grammatical clauses and patterns of language use**

BP does not share this constraint with HB. Multivariate analysis revealed that in BP conditional (consequent) and adverbial clauses strongly favour [l]. On the other hand, interrogative and relative clauses prefer [s] to [l].

Table 4.3, which provides the frequencies of the past tense variants in the different types of clauses across the patterns of language use in BP, indicates the separation of L1 from L2 and code-switches. In L1, every type of grammatical clause prefers [l] to [s]. However, the frequency of [l] in the relative and interrogative clauses declines slightly. Conversely, there is an increase in the use of [s] in relative and interrogative clauses.

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | **HB** | **HB** |
| ***(III) Grammatical Clauses*** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** |
| *Conditional-Consequent* | 71 | 29 | 100 | 00 | - | - | 67 | 33 |
| *Adverbial* | 92 | 08 | - | - | 50 | 50 | 12 | 88 |
| *Other* | 73 | 27 | 39 | 61 | 13 | 87 | 23 | 77 |
| *Interrogative* | 61 | 39 | 33 | 67 | 20 | 80 | 31 | 69 |
| *Relative-Correlative* | 56 | 44 | 50 | 50 | - | - | 09 | 91 |

*Table 4.3 [l] and [s] by grammatical clause and patterns of language use*

These grammatical clauses, except conditional clauses as in table 4.3 demonstrate a turn towards the higher use of [s] in the L2 and code-switches. The conditional clauses prefer [l] even in L2. The preference for [l] in conditional clauses is also observed in HB data of the Bengalis. Data of conditional clauses from code-switches are not available for comparison. Instances of relative clauses in code-switches and adverbial clauses in L2 are also not found in this corpus. Therefore a comparison of linguistic patterning of these types of clauses in code-switches and L2 could not be drawn.

**(IV) Negation and patterns of language use**

A relation between negation and past tense marking exists in BP. The variant [s] is favoured in negative sentences, whereas [l] is slightly more used in affirmative sentences. A cross-tabulation of [l] and [s] by negation and patterns of language use as represented in table 4.4 and figure 4.1 indicates preference for [l] in affirmative sentences in the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) discourse only. But the negative sentences in L1 show a slightly higher use of [s].

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | **HB** | **HB** |
| ***(IV) Negation*** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** |
| *Negative* | 48 | 52 | 33 | 67 | 0 | 100 | 14 | 86 |
| *Affirmative* | 76 | 24 | 40 | 60 | 15 | 85 | 18 | 81 |

*Table 4.4 [l] and [s] by negation and patterns of language use*

The Bengali monolingual (L2) discourse and code-switches demonstrate the HB trend, that is, preference for [s] in both affirmative and negative sentences. Nevertheless, the frequency of [s] is higher in negative sentences. In fact, frequency of [s] in the code-switched data overshoots the HB pattern (See table 4.4 and figure 4.1).

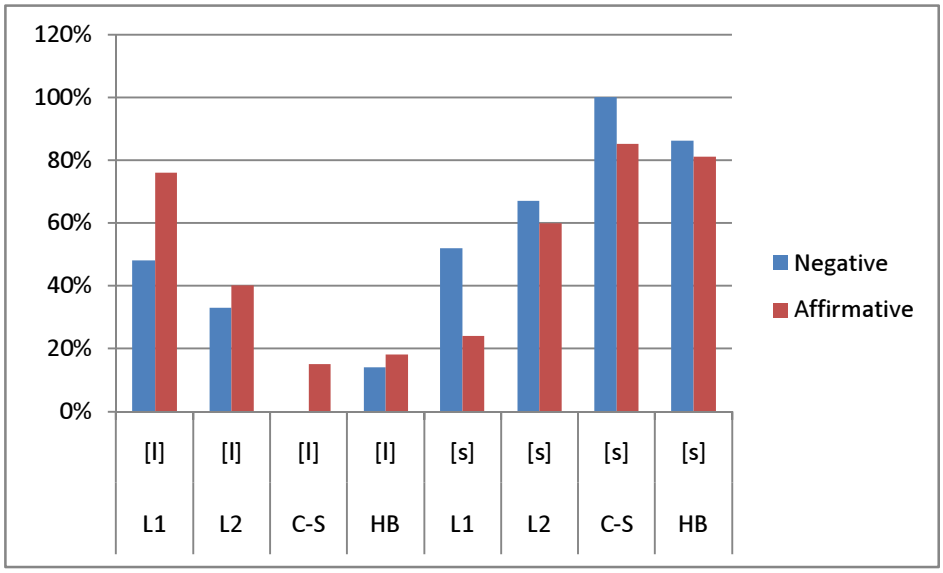



*Figure 4.1 [l] and [s] in negative and affirmative sentences in BP and HB*

**(V) Stativity and patterns of language use**

BP and HB resemble each other with regard to the distribution of past tense forms [l ~ s] in stative and non-stative verbs. The stative verbs show overwhelming use of [s], but the non-stative verbs demonstrate a little preference for [l] in both BP and HB.

| ***Factor Group*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | **HB** | **HB** |
| ***(V) Stativity*** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** |
| *Stative* | 50 | 50 | 12 | 88 | 10 | 90 | 9 | 91 |
| *Non-Stative* | 76 | 24 | 43 | 57 | 14 | 86 | 21 | 79 |

*Table 4.5 [l] and [s] by stativity and patterns of language use*

The result of cross-tabulation of past tense variants by stativity and patterns of language use as in table 4.5 however, indicates the predominance of [l] in non-stative verbs in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data alone. Stative verbs in L1 do not demonstrate

preference for [s], and instead show neutral behaviour with respect to the choice of past tense marker.

Table 4.5 suggests that the Bengali monolingual (L2) and code-switched speech display a turn towards the HB trend. HB shows more use of [s] in both stative and non-stative verbs. However, the frequency of [s] is higher in stative verbs. The stative verbs in L2 and code-switched data replicate the HB pattern. But the non-stative verbs in L2 partially succeed in emulating the HB trend. Despite the switch towards [s], the differentiation of stative from non-stative is maintained to a considerable degree in L2. On the other hand, the non-stative verbs in the code-switched data go beyond HB in the use of [s].

The cross-tabulation results summarized in the above discussion provide insights on the nature of relationship between (i) patterns of language use and other linguistic constraints, (ii) L1 and HB, and (iii) L1 and L2 and HB.

### 4.2.1 Social Factors and Patterns of Language Use in Past Tense Category

In this study, tense, aspect and mood variants were coded for social variables such as age, gender, social class and education to explore the social dimension of the linguistic variation across the tense, aspect and mood categories in BP (See Appendix-V). Social differentiation of linguistic variation has been explored in variationist sociolinguistic studies of speech communities (Labov 1966, 1972, Wolfarm 1969). Though the multivariate rule program did not retain any social factor as statistically significant in conditioning the frequency of the past variants [l ~ s] in BP (See Appendix-VI), cross-tabulations of [l ~ s] by social variables and patterns of language use were done to explore whether there is any social differentiation of past tense marking across the different linguistic repertoire of the bilingual Bishnupriyas. The results of the cross-tabulations of past variants by social factors such as age, gender, social class, education and patterns of language use are discussed in the following:

**(I) Age, gender and patterns of language use**

The age effect on distribution of past tense forms across the patterns of language use (L1, L2 and C-S) of the Bishnupriyas is shown in table 4.6.

| ***Social Factor*** | **BP** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** |
| ***(I) Age Group*** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** |
| *4-10* | 62 | 38 | - | - | - | - |
| *11-19* | 55 | 45 | - | - | 8 | 92 |
| *20-35* | 74 | 26 | 18 | 82 | 3 | 97 |
| *36-49* | 74 | 26 | 58 | 42 | 33 | 67 |
| *50-59* | 77 | 23 | - | - | 18 | 82 |
| *60+* | 81 | 19 | 57 | 43 | 18 | 82 |

*Table 4.6 [l] and [s] by age and patterns of language use*

Table 4.6 shows that Bishnupriya speakers of all age groups demonstrate much higher use of [l] in their Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) discourse. These speakers shift towards [s] when they code-switch to HB. However, members of the younger age groups show relatively higher shift towards [s] in their code-switches. The younger speaker's leaning towards [s] is visible even in L1 (See table 4.6). The younger speakers have Bengali peer groups and socialize more with Bengalis. On the other hand, the older speakers (50 and above) demonstrate the exact replica of the HB pattern ([s] = 81% and [l] = 18%) when they switch to HB, but at the same time show the highest use of [l] in their L1.

The youngest speakers (4-10 years) must not have acquired the bilingual competence required for code-switching as no instances of code-switches emerged in

their speech. Table 4.6 also shows that only three age cohorts represented the L2 data. In L2 also, the younger ones demonstrate strong preference for [s], whereas the older two groups use more [l] than [s].

| ***Social Factor*** | **BP** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** |
| ***(II) Gender*** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** |
| *Female* | 69 | 31 | 57 | 43 | 9 | 91 |
| *Male* | 79 | 21 | 18 | 82 | 19 | 81 |

*Table 4.7 [l] and [s] by gender and patterns of language use*

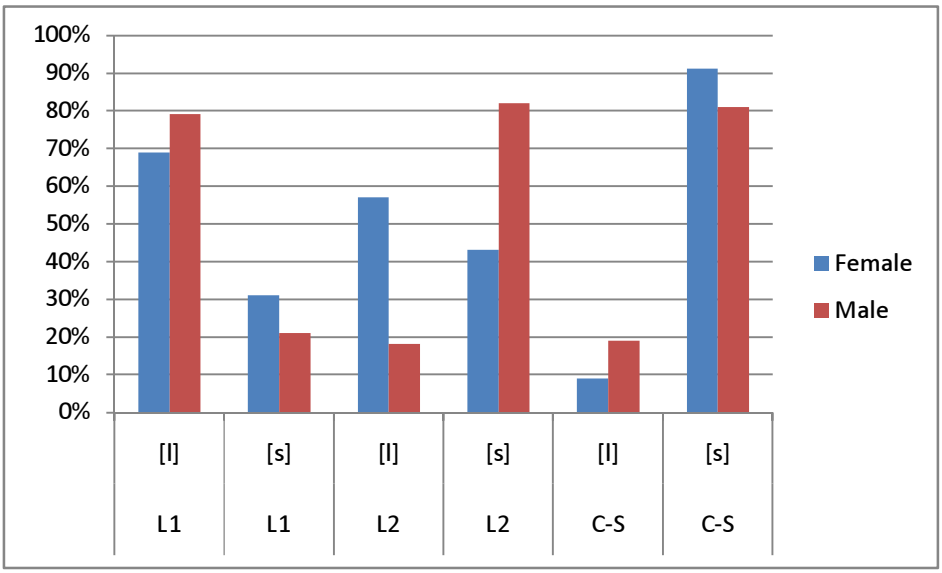



*Figure 4.2 [l] and [s] across gender in BP*

Table 4.7 and figure 4.2 indicate a slight gender difference in all the three kinds of linguistic codes of the Bishnupriyas. Men and women follow similar trends in L1 and code-switches. They prefer [l] more in L1, whereas in the code-switched data, they opt for [s] more. Nonetheless, women are ahead of men in the use of [s], and lag behind men

in the use of [l] in these two types of codes (L1 and C-S). In L2, men and women display opposite trend. Women prefer [l] and the men use more [s]. The difference between men and women in L2 may be attributed to many factors. Bengali is the official language of Hailakandi and knowledge of the language is essential for better prospects. In Bishnupriya society, the onus is on men to earn and look after the family. Therefore men, though are more [l] users, try to appear like Bengali and neutralize the distance between Bishnupriya and Bengali when they interact in HB (L2) in order to avail better opportunities in jobs or small trades. Women, on the other hand, do not have to strive for such excellence.

Otherwise, women tend to use [s] slightly more than men when they talk in monolingual Bishnupriya (L1) or code-switch from Bishnupriya to HB. It has been observed that women code-switch slightly more than men as 60.8 percent (N=14/23) of the speakers who code-switch are women. Secondly, 58.5 percent of [s] appears in the speech of women.

**(II) Social class and patterns of language use**

The Bishnupriya speech community is represented largely by middle class (MC) population. Nevertheless, a small section of the population represents the other two social classes, that is, upper middle class (UMC) and lower class (LC). Therefore, the data garnered for this study comes primarily from the middle class speakers. The distribution of the past variants across the social classes in the Bishnupriya repertoire as in table 4.8 indicates that members of every social class use [l] more than [s] in L1. The frequency of [l] gradually declines as one moves from the UMC to the intermediate class (MC) and then to the lowest class (LC) in L1. A cross-tabulation between age and social class revealed that the many people belonging to UMC were those who were above fifty. We have seen that the members of the older age groups use [l] much more than [s] in their Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) discourse. Bishnupriya speakers belonging to the middle-class though demonstrate high use of [l] in L1, shift to [s] in their L2 and code-switched discourses. Due to either absence or unavailability of sufficient data from UMC and LC

in L2 and code-switches, comparison between different classes could not be drawn in these two kinds of codes.

| ***Social Factor*** | **BP** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** |
| ***(II) Social Class*** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** |
| *UMC* | 80 | 20 | - | - | - | 100 (N=2) |
| *MC* | 72 | 28 | 39 | 61 | 14 | 86 |
| *LC* | 66 | 34 | - | - | - | 100 (N=4) |

*Table 4.8 [l] and [s] by social class and patterns of language use*

**(III) Education and patterns of language use**

Education as a social factor did not turn out to be significant for affecting variability between [l] and [s] in BP. However, cross-tabulation of past tense variants by education and patterns of language use throws light on some effects of education in sociolinguistic patterning of past tense variants in BP (See table 4.9). For instance, post-graduates display highest use of [l] and lowest use of [s] in L1. These speakers (post-graduates) exactly replicate the HB pattern in their L2 discourse, but at the same time, they do not engage in code-switching. There were no instances of code-switches in the speech of five post-graduate speakers even in 10 hours of data elicited from these speakers. The highest use of [s] in L1 occurs in the slot for the educational index HS (high school). We have seen earlier in the discussion on interaction between age and patterns of language use that younger speakers show a little inclination towards [s]. The speakers representing the educational slot HS are largely represented by younger speakers. However, the frequency of [s] declines in slot for HS in L2.

| *Social Factor* | **BP** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** |
| ***(IV) Education*** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** | **[l] %** | **[s] %** |
| *LP* | 71 | 29 | - | - | - | 100 |
| *MS* | 77 | 23 | - | - | 11 | 89 |
| *HS* | 65 | 35 | 57 | 43 | 17 | 83 |
| *COL* | 71 | 29 | - | - | 4 | 96 |
| *GRAD* | 76 | 24 | - | - | 22 | 78 |
| *PG* | 82 | 18 | 18 | 82 | - | - |

*Table 4.9 [l] and [s] by education and patterns of language use*

Cross-tabulation of past variants by education and gender revealed that the L2 speakers with HS education are women. Women display less use of [s] in their L2 speech.

### 4.2.2 Analysis

To sum up, it can be said that the linguistic patterning of past tense marking in BP is determined by the various codes used by the Bishnupriyas. The Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech shows preference for [l], whereas Bengali monolingual (L2) and the code-switched data demonstrate a shift towards [s], which is the HB trend. The Bishnupriyas identify [l] with Bishnupriya monolingual discourse and [s] with the local Bengali, that is HB.

Despite the preference for [s] over [l] in both code-switches and Bengali monolingual (L2) data, there is a difference in their frequency in these two types of codes. The frequency of [s] is higher in the code-switched data than in the Bengali monolingual (L2) data. The code-switched data of the Bishnupriyas demonstrates proximity with the HB pattern of past marking.

The cross-tabulation of the past tense variants by bilingual patterns of language use and the social factors sheds light on the social dimension of variation in past tense marking in BP. The younger speakers (11-35) demonstrate slight preference for [s] over [l]. Even in L1, where we have seen higher use of [l] by speakers of every age groups, the frequency of [l] declines in the speech of adolescents. The youngest Bishnupriya speakers (4-10 years) do not indulge in code-switching.

Men and women display similar pattern of past tense marking in Bishnupriya monolingual data and code-switches. However, there is a small difference between men and women with regard to the distribution of the past variants in L1 and code-switched data. Men are ahead of women in the use of [l], but lag behind women in the use of [s]. The L2 data shows men and women following opposite trend. The distribution of the past variants across the different social classes does not denote any noteworthy social stratification of the past tense variants in BP. Nevertheless, there are slight differences across the three social classes in the distribution of the past variants. Despite the fact that [l] is used more in L1 data by members of each social class, the frequency of [l] slowly declines in the speech of middle class and lower class.

Education as a social factor does play a role in sociolinguistic patterning of past tense variants in Bishnupriya. The most educated people among the Bishnupriyas, that is, the post-graduates, show the highest use of [l] in the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) discourse and do not engage in code-switches.

Across social factors, we find more or less similar trends that is, [l] dominates over [s] in L1, but a shift towards the HB pattern in the code-switches. It is L2 where much differentiation exists across social factors such as age, gender and education. However, given the small representation of data in L2, the findings in L2 are not all conclusive. A few observations on the social dimension of variation in past tense marking in L1 and code-switches can be made. The younger speakers show a slight inclination toward [s], which is more preferred in HB.

### 4.3 Effects of Patterns of Language Use on Habitual Category

The variation in the habitual category is in L1 data only (See table 4.10). The other two linguistic codes, that is, code-switches and L2 follow the HB pattern. These two codes are almost near categorically marked by [Ø], which is the HB habitual marker. Two linguistic constraints (i) patterns of language use and (ii) generic/non-generic distinction condition variability in the habitual category in BP.

| ***(I) Patterns of Language Use*** | | **[r]** | **[l]** | **[Ø]** | **[s]** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | N | 1616 | 37 | 29 | 18 | 1700 |
| | % | 95 | 2.1 | 1.7 | 1 | |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | N | 5 | - | 59 | - | 64 |
| | % | 7.8 | - | 92.1 | - | |
| *Bishnupriya to Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | N | 4 | - | 120 | - | 124 |
| | % | 3.2 | - | 96.7 | - | |
| *HB Data (of the Bengalis)* | N | - | - | 380 | - | 380 |
| | % | - | - | 100 | | |

*Table 4.10 Habitual variants across BP and HB*

Cross-tabulation of habitual variants [r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s] by patterns of language use and generic/non-generic factor as represented in figure 4.3 shows that a majority of the habitual situations covering both generic and non-generic sentences are marked by [r] in L1. As [l] indicates a small percentage of generic sentences, the frequency of [r] slightly declines in generic sentences.[4]

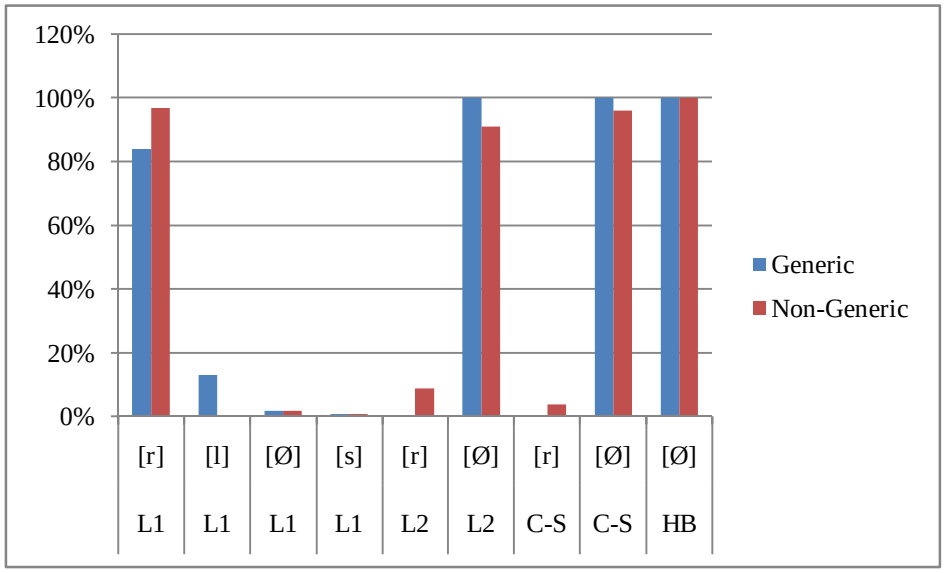



*Figure 4.3 Habitual variants across generic and non-generic in BP and HB*

The distribution of habitual forms in generic and non-generic sentences in the L2 and the code-switched data closely resemble the HB pattern. The generic sentences in L2 and code-switches do not show any variability as they are categorically indicated by [Ø]. However, [Ø] faces a very insignificant alternation from [r] in the non-generic sentences.

### 4.3.1 Social Factors and Patterns of Language Use in Habitual Category

Social factors do not condition the distribution of the habitual forms in BP (See Appendix-VII). Even cross-tabulations of the habitual forms by social factors and patterns of language use did not reveal any social differentiation of habitual variants. Speakers across every age group, gender, social class and index of education show dominant use of [r] in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data and [Ø] in Bengali monolingual (L2) and code-switched data. There is absence of any linguistic patterning of habitual variants based on age, gender, social class or education.

Nevertheless, the distribution of [r], [l], [Ø] and [s] across speakers in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data as in table 4.11 pointed out a few things. [r], which marks 95% of the total instances of present habitual situations is the core variant and is

present in the speech of all the informants (49 speakers). [l] is used by only those speakers (N=8/49) who have generic contexts present in their speech data.[5] The third variant [Ø], which marks only 1.7% of the present habitual verbs is produced by 19/49 speakers. The appearance of [Ø] in L1 though minimal, suggests a new linguistic change, which may be an outcome of Bishnupriya-Bengali bilingualism in Hailakandi. This conjecture is based on some observations. It is noted that though [Ø] surfaces in the speech of 19 speakers, not more than three tokens of [Ø] appear in the speech of any of these speakers. The oldest speakers (60 and above) and post-graduates show the least use of [Ø]. These two groups produce one token of [Ø] each. On the other hand, a large majority (65.5%, N=19/29) of the tokens of [Ø] appear in the speech of college and high school students taken together. Thus, it can be said that the emergence of the HB variant [Ø] in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data is an indication of a new linguistic change probably introduced by young college and school students. The fourth variant [s] which marks merely 1.1% (N= 18) of present habitual situations in L1 is used by 9 speakers. 7 out of these 9 are women. Moreover, 7 tokens of [s] are found in the speech of a sixty-eight year old woman.

A few instances of [r] are noticed in L2 (N=5) and code-switched (N=4) data, which is otherwise dominantly marked by [Ø]. In L2 data, 4 out of the 5 tokens of [r] are present in the speech of a post-graduate speaker. The two speakers who use [r] along with [Ø] in L2 speech, demonstrate use of [r] alone in their L1 discourse. Instances of code-switches surface in the speech of 22 out of 49 speakers. All the 22 speakers use [Ø] to mark present habitual verbs embedded in code-switches. However, four speakers demonstrate use of [r] along with [Ø]. There is no plausible explanation for the presence of 4 tokens of [r] in the speech of these four informants. No instances of code-switches could be found in the speech of post-graduates and small children. The post-graduates are bilingual but prefer not to code-switch to HB.

| No | Speaker ID | Variant (N) [r] | [l] | [Ø] | [s] | Gender (m/f) | Age | Social Class | Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Q | 25 | - | - | | f | 91 | LC | LP |
| 2 | S | 17 | - | - | | m | 81 | UMC | GRAD |
| 3 | O | 17 | - | 1 | - | m | 80 | LC | MS |
| 4 | i | 31 | 2 | - | - | m | 79 | MC | GRAD |
| 5 | l | 39 | - | - | 7 | f | 68 | MC | MS |
| 6 | j | 34 | 2 | - | | f | 66 | MC | MS |
| 7 | 2 | 19 | - | - | - | m | 59 | MC | PG |
| 8 | c | 18 | - | - | - | m | 58 | UMC | PG |
| 9 | R | 10 | - | - | - | f | 56 | UMC | HS |
| 10 | f | 7 | - | - | - | m | 56 | LC | COL |
| 11 | z | 101 | - | - | 3 | f | 54 | MC | COL |
| 12 | N | 32 | - | - | 1 | f | 54 | MC | MS |
| 13 | 4 | 32 | - | 2 | - | f | 52 | UMC | MS |
| 14 | E | 87 | 2 | - | 1 | f | 51 | MC | MS |
| 15 | A | 75 | - | 1 | | f | 50 | MC | COL |
| 16 | d | 69 | - | 1 | - | m | 49 | MC | GRAD |
| 17 | D | 4 | - | - | - | m | 49 | MC | GRAD |
| 18 | a | 56 | - | 1 | 1 | m | 45 | MC | GRAD |
| 19 | U | 45 | 10 | 1 | - | m | 42 | MC | GRAD |
| 20 | r | 82 | - | - | - | m | 41 | LC | GRAD |
| 21 | 1 | 37 | - | - | - | f | 40 | LC | MS |
| 22 | Y | 32 | - | - | - | f | 40 | MC | HS |
| 23 | t | 7 | - | - | 1 | f | 38 | UMC | COL |
| 24 | p | 25 | - | 1 | - | m | 31 | MC | PG |
| 25 | h | 3 | - | - | - | m | 30 | MC | PG |
| 26 | G | 35 | - | - | - | f | 30 | MC | COL |
| 27 | 7 | 2 | - | - | - | m | 29 | MC | GRAD |
| 28 | m | 24 | - | - | - | m | 29 | UMC | PG |
| 29 | g | 116 | 5 | - | 2 | f | 27 | MC | COL |
| 30 | x | 18 | 12 | - | 1 | m | 26 | MC | GRAD |
| 31 | n | 26 | - | - | - | m | 25 | MC | GRAD |
| 32 | s | 11 | - | 2 | - | f | 24 | MC | COL |
| 33 | P | 55 | 2 | 2 | - | f | 22 | MC | COL |
| 34 | v | 30 | - | 2 | - | f | 22 | MC | COL |
| 35 | w | 2 | 2 | - | - | m | 19 | MC | COL |
| 36 | u | 191 | - | 3 | - | f | 18 | LC | HS |
| 37 | k | 18 | - | 2 | - | m | 18 | MC | HS |
| 38 | 3 | 7 | - | 1 | 1 | f | 17 | MC | HS |
| 39 | b | 7 | - | 1 | - | f | 17 | LC | HS |
| 40 | q | 6 | - | 1 | - | f | 17 | MC | HS |
| 41 | o | 33 | - | 3 | - | m | 16 | MC | HS |
| 42 | 6 | 1 | - | 2 | - | f | 14 | MC | HS |
| 43 | B | 25 | | | - | m | 11 | MC | MS |
| 44 | e | 36 | - | - | - | m | 11 | UMC | MS |
| 45 | J | 22 | - | 1 | - | m | 8 | MC | LP |
| 46 | K | 5 | - | - | - | f | 7 | MC | LP |
| 47 | 9 | 15 | - | 1 | - | f | 6 | MC | LP |
| 48 | 8 | 21 | - | - | - | f | 5 | LC | LP |
| 49 | M | 6 | - | - | - | m | 4 | MC | LP |

*Table 4.11 [r ~ l ~ Ø ~ s] across individual speakers in L1*

### 4.4 Effects of Patterns of Language Use on Past Habitual Category

The distribution of past habitual variants as shown in table 4.12 suggests variability in the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data alone. Three variants [r], [l] and [t] compete with each other in L1. In the L2 and the code-switched speech, Bishnupriyas strictly follow the HB norm. Like the Bengalis, they too use only [t] in their L2 and code-switches. From the qualitative analysis, any other linguistic factor that might have any role in conditioning the variability in the past habitual category in L1 could not be determined.

| ***Patterns of Language Use*** | **[l] %** | **[r] %** | **[t] %** | **[s] %** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | 41.2 | 30 | 27.8 | 0.9 |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | - | - | 100 | - |
| *Bishnupriya to Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | - | - | 100 | - |
| *HB Data of the Bengalis* | - | - | 100 | - |

*Table 4.12 Past Habitual variants in BP and HB*

#### 4.4.1 Social Factors and Patterns of Language Use in Past Habitual Category

Social factors did not turn out to be statistically significant for any past habitual variants (See Appendix-VIII). However, a close analysis of the distribution of past habitual variants across the various social factors (age, gender, social class and education) reveals some social differentiation of past habitual variants. The past habitual category surfaced in the speech of 31 out of 49 speakers. Instances of code-switches crop up in the speech of only 8 out of these 31 speakers.

The verbs that denote past habitual meaning in Bengali monolingual (L2) and code-switched data of the Bishnupriyas show no variability in marking. Therefore, the discussion on the social dimension of linguistic patterning in past habitual category is limited to Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech of the Bishnupriyas.

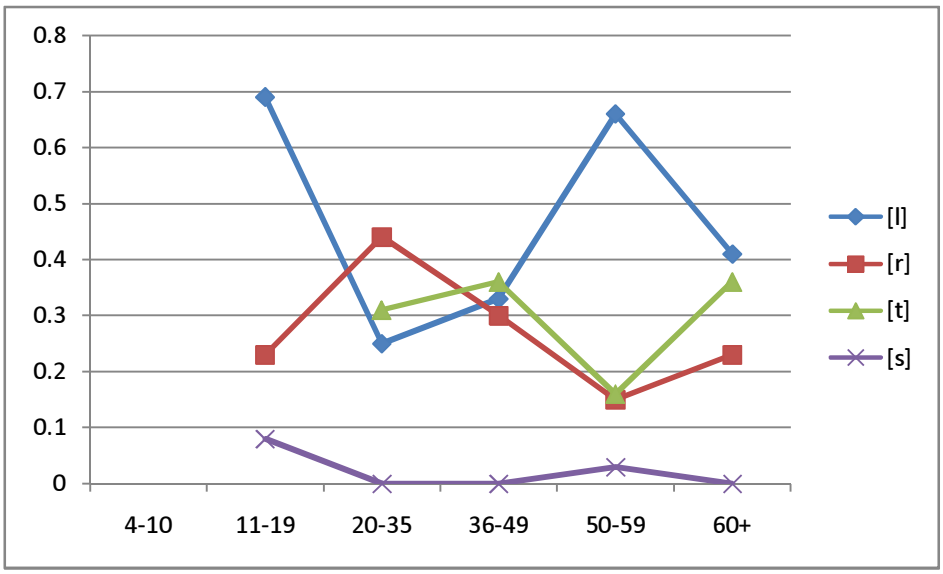



*Figure 4.4 Past Habitual variants across age groups in L1*

The distribution of past habitual variants in L1 across every age cohort as represented in figure 4.4 indicates a connection between past habitual variants and age groups. Data of past habitual verb is not available from small children (4-10 years). The presence of [l] is very high in the speech of the adolescents and the older members (50-59 years). Young adults (20-35 years) who are a generation older than adolescents demonstrate a slight preference for [r]. The middle aged group favour [t] a little more. Preference for [t] over [r] is demonstrated by the oldest (60 and above) speakers as well. However, adolescents do not use [t].

Gender differences as plotted in figure 4.5 do not reveal any significant gender differentiation in linguistic patterning of past habitual variants in Bishnupriya monolingual data (L1). Nonetheless, women use [l] slightly more than men. Men on the other hand use [t] a little more than their female counterpart. It has been observed that while referring to past habitual category, women switch to HB more than men. 6 out of 8 speakers who participate in code-switches are women.

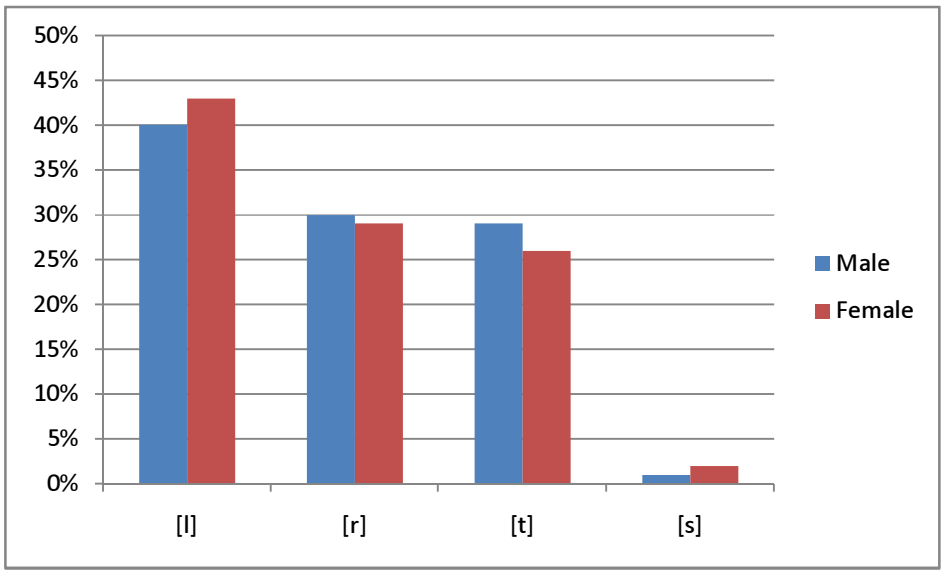



*Figure 4.5 Past Habitual variants across male and female in L1*

Social stratification of the past habitual variants as shown in figure 4.6 indicates some kind of linguistic patterning based on social class.

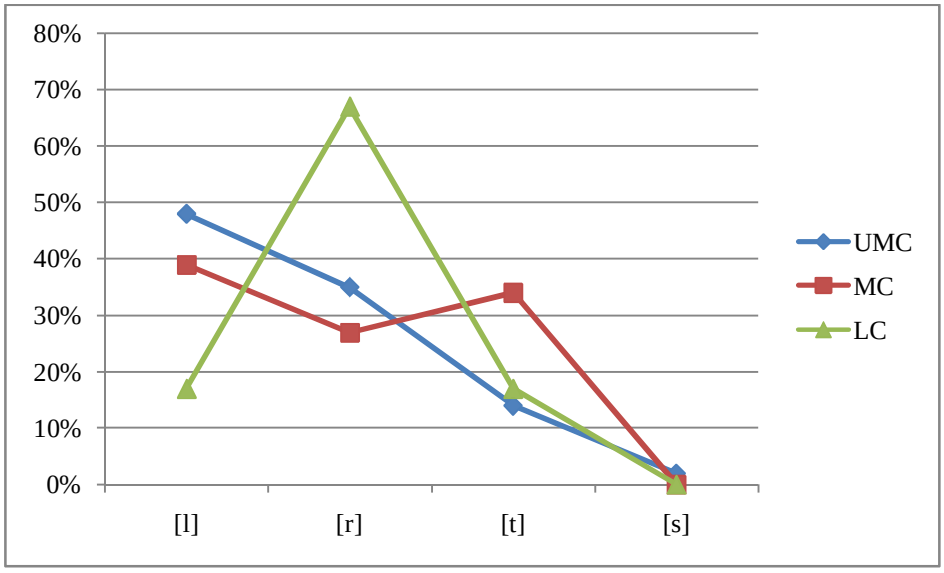



*Figure 4.6 Past Habitual variants across the social class in L1*

The members of UMC use [l] maximally, followed by [r] and then finally [t]. MC speakers also display more use of [l], and then [t], which is followed by [r]. However,

unlike in UMC data, in MC data the difference between the frequency of these three forms [l] > [t] > [r] is thin. Figure 4.6 also shows that though the MC speakers use [l] slightly more than [t], the highest use of [t] is recorded in their speech. The LC speakers demonstrate a very high frequency of use of [r]. A small percentage of [t] and [l] appear their speech. Thus, the distribution of past habitual variants across the social class as in figure 4.6 suggests that [l] is preferred by the upper strata of society (UMC, MC) and [r] is the choice of the lower class. A significant presence of [t], which is the HB variant, is seen in the speech MC speakers. The other two social groups at the two extreme ends that is, UMC and LC display very little use of [t].

The distribution of past habitual variants in the indexes of education provided in figure 4.7 suggests two things (i) very high use of [l] in the slot for MS (middle school) and (ii) large presence of [r] in index HS (high school). Apart from these two points, it is difficult to find any other relevance of education on past habitual marking.

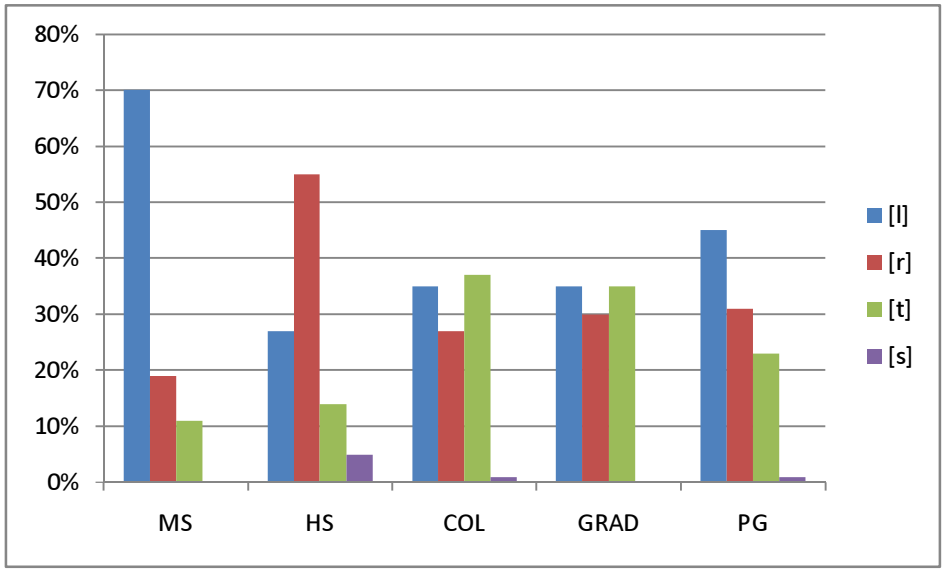



*Figure 4.7 Past Habitual variants in the indexes of education in L1*

### 4.4.2 Analysis

The variability in past habitual category is in Bishnupriya monolingual data alone. The L2 code and code-switches show convergence with HB. The variants [l ~ r ~ s] separates monolingual Bishnupriya from the bilingual Bishnupriya (L2 and C-S). The variant [t] forms a continuum between monolingual Bishnupriya and the bilingual codes. The variability between [l ~ r ~ s] could not be accounted by any linguistic constraints. [t] to some extent is conditioned by "patterns of language use", as it is the only variant that occurs in L2 and code-switches also. Initially, it may be presumed that the presence of [t] in L1 is the result of interactions between the Bishnupriyas and the Bengalis. However, the frequency of [t] in L1, and the presence of [t] in the speech of the oldest speakers suggest that it is an inherited feature of earlier contact with Bengali dialects rather than an outcome of present Bishnupriya and Bengali bilingualism. Probably [t] is on the decline as it is not present in the speech of adolescents. Instead, [l] is gaining more popularity as it occurs slightly more in the speech of adolescents, upper class members, and women.

## 4.5 Effects of Patterns of Language Use on Present Progressive Category

There is variability between [r ~ s ~ te-s] in the present progressive category in BP. Apart from patterns of language use, function of any other linguistic factor in influencing the variability in present progressive marking could not be established. Table 4.13 shows that in L1, [r] faces very little alternation from [s], whereas in code-switches, it faces slight alternation from [te-s]. The L2 data shows significant alternation between [r] and [te-s].

| **Patterns of Language Use** | | **[r]** | **[s]** | **[te-s]** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | N | 513 | 14 | - | 527 |
| | % | **97.3** | **2.6** | - | |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | N | 12 | - | 9 | 21 |
| | % | **57.1** | - | **42.8** | |
| *Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | N | 20 | - | 4 | 24 |
| | % | **83.3** | - | **16.6** | |
| *HB Data (of the Bengalis)* | N | 254 | - | - | |
| | % | **100** | - | - | |

*Table 4.13 Present Progressive variants in BP and HB*

### 4.5.1 Social Factors and Patterns of Language Use in Present Progressive Category

Cross-tabulations of [r ~ s ~ te-s] by social factors and patterns of language use unfold the variability within and across the speakers. The present progressive situations occur in the speech of 43 out of 49 informants. In L1, all these 43 speakers use [r] to indicate present progressive situations. Only 12 out of these 43 use [s] as well. The code-switched data emerges in the speech of 9 out of 43 speakers.

Table 4.14 shows in L1 [r] is overwhelmingly used by members of all age groups. A few instances of [s] also surfaces in these age cohorts. However, small children refrain from using [s] at all.

| ***Social Factor*** | **BP** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** |
| ***(I) Age Group*** | **[r] %** | **[s] %** | **[r] %** | **[te-s] %** | **[r] %** | **[te-s] %** |
| *4-10* | 100 (N=14) | - | - | - | - | - |
| *11-19* | 99 | 1 | - | - | 100 | - |
| *20-35* | 93 | 7 | 100 | - | 100 | - |
| *36-49* | 99 | 1 | 36 | 64 | 100 | - |
| *50-59* | 98 | 2 | - | - | 60 | 40 |
| *60+* | 96 | 4 | 100 | - | 100 | - |

*Table 4.14 [r ~ s ~ te-s] by age and patterns of language use*

The dominance of [r] across age groups is visible in code-switches and L2 as well. In code-switches only one speaker belonging to the 50-59 years group use [te-s] apart from [r]. This variant [te-s] though not found in HB data, is attested in Standard Bengali and other Bengali varieties spoken in the region (See Chatterjee 1926: 1019).[6] This speaker who demonstrate use of [te-s] in code-switches, have spent many years in Guwahati, where [te-s] is used in Bengali to indicate present progressive meaning.

Therefore, the appearance of [te-s] apart from [r] in his speech can be taken as interference of the Bengali variety spoken in Guwahati. In L2, [te-s] surfaces in the speech of a women belonging to 36-49 years range. She has acquired Bengali primarily through education and unlike many of her fellows has very little interaction with Bengalis. Recently, she has moved to Hailakandi town from Donapur village to educate her children. During my visits to her house, I have observed that she spends a lot of her time teaching her son Bengali as she complained that her eight year old son, who recently joined a school in Hailakandi town, is grappling with Bengali. Her pre-occupation with her son's education drives her closer to the Standard Bengali, which is the medium of education in Hailakandi. This is probably the reason for [te-s] outweighing [r] in her speech. The other two speakers from whom L2 data was elicited demonstrate use of [r] alone. The appearance of [te-s] can be seen as an idiosyncratic behaviour of two individual speakers. Except these two speakers, all the other Bishnupriya speakers replicate the HB pattern, that is, use [r] only in their L2 and code-switched data.

| ***Social Factor*** | **BP** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | |
| | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** |
| ***(II) Gender*** | **[r] %** | **[s] %** | **[r] %** | **[te-s] %** | **[r] %** | **[te-s] %** |
| *Female* | 96 | 4 | 44 | 56 | 100 | - |
| *Male* | 99 | 1 | 100 | - | 67 | 33% |

*Table 4.15 [r ~ s ~ te-s] by gender and patterns of language use*

Table 4.15, which shows the result of cross-tabulation, suggests that both women and men use [r] more in their Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) discourse. However, [s] appears more in women. Out of total 12 speakers, who use [s] along with [r], 8 of them are women. Women participate in code-switching more than men do. It has been observed that out of total 9 speakers who switch to HB, 6 are women.

Cross-tabulation results also point out that there is absence of any linguistic patterning of present progressive verbs based on social class and education. The variant

[r] is preferred across all social class and all index of education. There is lack of any instances of code-switches in the speech of the post-graduates in the present progressive category as well.

### 4.5.2 Analysis

The present progressive situations in BP follow the HB pattern, that is, use [r]. However, a few instances of [s] in L1 may be a remnant of past history of language contact. It is to be noted that [s] indicates progressive functions in some dialects of Bengali (See Chatterjee 1926). The presence of [te-s] in bilingual discourses should be seen as an idiosyncratic behaviour of two individuals and not as a present progressive variant in BP.

## 4.6 Effects of Patterns of Language Use on Irrealis Category

BP and HB do not have similar distribution of the irrealis variants [t ~ b ~ ŋ ~ m] (See table 4.16). In BP, [t] is favoured in Bishnupriya monolingual data (L1), whereas [b] is used more in L2 and bilingual discourses, even though HB does not show preference for [b].

In the irrealis category, apart from the linguistic constraint “patterns of language use” there are other linguistic factors, which turned out to be significant for irrealis variants in BP. Cross-tabulations of the irrealis variants by “the patterns of language use” and other linguistic factors were done to see the impact of the different linguistic codes on the different linguistic factors conditioning the irrealis marking in BP.

| ***Factor Group*** | | **BP** | | | | **HB** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Patterns of Language Use*** | | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[ŋ]** | **[m]** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[m]** |
| *Bishnupriya Monolingual (L1) Data* | N | 1226 | 5 | 71 | - | - | - | - |
| | % | 94.1 | 0.3 | 5.4 | - | - | - | - |
| *Bengali Monolingual (L2) Data* | N | 14 | 21 | - | 5 | 115 | 105 | 59 |
| | % | 35 | 52.5 | - | 12.5 | 41.2 | 37.6 | 21.1 |
| *Bishnupriya-Bengali Code-Switched (C-S) Data* | N | 39 | 55 | - | 11 | - | - | - |
| | % | 37.1 | 52.3 | - | 10.4 | - | - | - |
| *Total* | N | 1279 | 81 | 71 | 16 | | | |
| | % | 88.5 | 5.6 | 4.9 | 1.1 | 41.2 | 37.6 | 21.1 |

*Table 4.16 Irrealis variants in BP and HB*

The following sections provide a discussion on the interaction between linguistic factors and patterns of language use as yielded by the cross-tabulation.

**(I) Nature of the situation and patterns of language use**

The factor group "nature of the situation" turned out statistically significant for [t] and [ŋ+m] in BP, and for [m] alone in HB. The "certain situations" favour [ŋ] and [m] in both these varieties. On the other hand, "hypothetical situations" favour [t] in BP only.

Cross-tabulation result as in table 4.17 shows that with first person subject, the frequency of [t] is higher than [ŋ] or [m] across the patterns of language use in BP. In HB, [m] is used more than [t]. Despite the fact that the three codes L1, L2 and code-switches display a similar linguistic trend, there is a big difference between L1 and the bilingual data (of the Bishnupriyas) with respect to the frequency of the variants [t], [ŋ] or [m]. The frequency of [t] though very high in L1 declines considerably, when

Bishnupriyas switch to HB. As a result, there is an increase in the use of [m] in code-switches. This is indicative of a change towards the direction of HB.

| ***I Person Subject*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| ***Factor Group*** | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | | |
| ***(I) Nature of the Situation*** | **[t] %** | **[ŋ] %** | **[t] %** | **[m] %** | **[t] %** | **[m] %** | **[t] %** | **[m] %** |
| *Hypothetical* | 92 | 8 | 86 | 14 | 69 | 31 | 41 | 59 |
| *Certain* | 74 | 26 | - | 100 (N=4) | 63 | 37 | 39 | 61 |

*Table 4.17 [t], [ŋ], [m] by nature of the situation and patterns of language use*

The result of cross-tabulation tallies with the findings of the multivariate analysis as well. Even though [t] is used more than [ŋ] and [m], the frequency of [t] declines in the slot for "certain situations", especially in L1. As a result, in L1 the frequency of [ŋ] rises considerably in "certain situations". In L2, all the four instances of certain situations are marked by [m]. In the code-switched data also, situations that are presumed to be certain have more [m] than the situations that are considered hypothetical. Nevertheless, in the code-switched data, the gap between hypothetical and certain situations is reduced, but not eliminated as [t] is used more than [m]. The lessening of the distinction between hypothetical and certain situations in code-switches is probably the impact of HB, where the distinction between the hypothetical and certain situations is minimal.

| ***II & III Person Subject*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| ***Factor Group*** | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | **HB** | **HB** |
| ***(I) Nature of the situation*** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** |
| *Hypothetical* | 99 | 01 | 23 | 77 | 26 | 74 | 42 | 58 |
| *Certain* | 98 | 02 | 20 | 80 | 14 | 86 | 42 | 58 |

*Table 4.18 [t] and [b] by nature of the situation and patterns of language use*

Table 4.18 shows that the Bishnupriyas separate L1 from L2 and code-switches in the second and third person subject contexts. In L1, there is near categorical use of [t] in both hypothetical and certain situations indicating a neutralization of the distinction between the two. The L2 and code-switched data demonstrate a switch towards [b], which is the HB pattern. Despite the fact that L2 and code-switched data follow the HB pattern of irrealis marking with second and third person subjects, there are some differences between the HB of the local Bengalis and the L2 or the code-switched data of the Bishnupriyas. For instance, first, in HB there is absence of any distinction between hypothetical and certain situations, whereas in L2 and especially in code-switches the frequency of [t] slightly increases in the hypothetical situations. Second, the frequencies of [t] and [b] in the L2 and code-switched data do not match with the frequencies of [t] and [b] in the HB data. The Bishnupriyas use more [b] and less [t] than the Bengalis, in their L2 and bilingual discourses.

**(II) Negation and patterns of language use**

Negative sentences strongly favour [t] in both BP and HB. The affirmative sentences on the other hand prefer [b], [ŋ] and [m]. The distribution of the irrealis variants [t ~ ŋ+m] in negative and affirmative sentences with first person subjects across the patterns of language use is provided in table 4.19.

| ***I Person Subject*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| ***Factor Group*** | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | **HB** | **HB** |
| ***(II) Negation*** | **[t] %** | **[ŋ] %** | **[t] %** | **[m] %** | **[t] %** | **[m] %** | **[t] %** | **[m] %** |
| *Negative* | 95 | 5 | - | - | 100 | - | 100 | - |
| *Affirmative* | 87 | 13 | 55 | 45 | 54 | 46 | 34 | 66 |

*Table 4.19 [t], [ŋ], [m] by negation and patterns of language use*

Table 4.19 suggests that with first person subject, Bishnupriyas prefer [t] in negative as well as affirmative sentences across the patterns of language use. The

distinction between negative and affirmative sentences is however maintained in varying degrees across the linguistic repertoire of the Bishnupriyas. In L1, narrow difference exists between the negative and affirmative sentences. The negative sentences use [t] slightly more than the affirmative sentences. In contrast, the frequency of [ŋ] slightly increases in the affirmative sentences.

The code-switched data shows remarkable differences between the negative and the affirmative sentences. The negative sentences in code-switches show categorical use of [t], and thereby completely adhere to the HB pattern (See table 4.19). In contrast to negative sentences, affirmative sentences in both code-switched data and L2 display slight preference for [t]. The affirmative sentences in L2 and code-switches do not succeed in completely replicating the HB pattern.

| ***II & III Person Subject*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| ***Factor Group*** | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | **HB** | **HB** |
| ***(II) Negation*** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** | **[t] %** | **[b] s%** |
| *Negative* | 100 | - | 100 | - | 89 | 11 | 91.7 | 8.3 |
| *Affirmative* | 99 | 1 | 22 | 78 | 16 | 84 | 38.5 | 61.5 |

*Table 4.20 [t] and [b] by negation and patterns of language use*

The pattern of irrealis marking of verbs in negative and affirmative sentences with second and third person subjects as given in table 4.20 indicates separation of L1 from L2 and code-switches. Bishnupriyas do not distinguish between negative and affirmative sentences with second and third person subjects in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) discourse. In L2 and code-switched discourse, a distinction between negative and affirmative sentences is drawn, which indicates a shift towards HB. The negative sentences are near categorically marked by [t], whereas the affirmative sentences are indicated largely by [b]. The pattern of marking in affirmative sentences in L2 and code-switches suggests that the Bishnupriyas override the Bengalis in the use of [b].

### 4.6.1 Social Factors and Patterns of Language Use in Irrealis Category

In the irrealis category also, the social factors were not selected as statistically significant (See Appendix-IX). Nevertheless, an attempt was made to explore any possible social differentiation of irrealis marking across the patterns of language use of the Bishnupriyas. The following discussion deals with the results of cross-tabulations of irrealis variants by social factors (age, gender, social class and education) and patterns of language use.

| ***I Person Subject*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| ***Social Factor*** | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | **HB** | **HB** |
| ***(I) Age Group*** | **[t] %** | **[ŋ] %** | **[t] %** | **[m] %** | **[t] %** | **[m] %** | **[t] %** | **[m] %** |
| | **88** | **12** | **55** | **45** | **66** | **34** | **40** | **60** |
| *4-10* | 67 | 33 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *11-19* | 91 | 09 | - | - | 55 | 45 | - | - |
| *20-35* | 91 | 09 | 55 | 45 | 57 | 43 | - | - |
| *36-49* | 84 | 16 | 57 | 43 | - | - | - | - |
| *50-59* | 87 | 13 | - | - | 77 | 23 | - | - |
| *60+* | 90 | 10 | 60 | 40 | 75 | 25 | - | - |

*Table 4.21 [t], [ŋ], [m] by age and patterns of language use*

Table 4.21 displays the distribution of [t], [ŋ] and [m] with first person subjects across the different age groups in BP. The Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data does not reveal any linguistic patterning based on age. Members of every age group display overriding use of [t] in the Bishnupriya monolingual discourse (L1). Scanty use of [ŋ] is demonstrated by members of every age group in this particular kind of code. Small children (4-10 years) though follow the trend of the community, use [ŋ] slightly more than others. Hence, the frequency of [t] declines in their speech. The result of quantitative analysis demonstrated that "certain situations" favour [ŋ] in BP. Thus, a cross-tabulation of [t] and [ŋ] by certain/hypothetical situations and age was done to see if there were

more instances of “certain situations” in the speech of small children. The result yielded by cross-tabulation did not reveal any significant differences between the frequency of hypothetical and certain situations in the speech of small children.

The Bengali monolingual (L2) and the code-switched data also show preference for [t] over [m] across all age groups (See table 4.21). However, the frequency of [t] decreases considerably in the bilingual discourses. Unlike L1, where there is a big difference between the distribution of [t] and [ ŋ], the margin between [t] and [m] is reduced to great extent in L2 and code-switched data. The irrealis marking in L2 and code-switched data signifies an attempt of modification in the pattern of HB. However, the speakers who are above fifty demonstrate greater use of [t] even in their bilingual discourses.

| ***II & III Person Subject*** | **BP** | | | | | | **HB** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Patterns of Language Use** | | | | | | | |
| ***Social Factor*** | **L1** | **L1** | **L2** | **L2** | **C-S** | **C-S** | **HB** | **HB** |
| ***(I) Age Group*** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** | **[t] %** | **[b] %** |
| | **99.3** | **0.7** | **28** | **72** | **25** | **75** | **42** | **58** |
| *4-10* | 100 | 00 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *11-19* | 97 | 03 | - | - | 16 | 84 | - | - |
| *20-35* | 100 | 00 | 19 | 81 | 16 | 84 | - | - |
| *36-49* | 100 | 00 | 20 | 80 | 18 | 82 | - | - |
| *50-59* | 100 | 00 | - | - | 19 | 81 | - | - |
| *60+* | 99 | 01 | 21 | 79 | 25 | 75 | - | - |

*Table 4.22 [t] and [b] by age and patterns of language use*

Speakers of every age group display similar pattern of irrealis marking of verbs with second and third person subjects as shown in table 4.22. Members of every age group demonstrate categorical or near categorical use of [t] in L1. These speakers switch

to greater use of [b] in their L2 and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. The L2 and code-switched data as in table 4.22 demonstrate that speakers of every age group in a bid to switch towards the HB form overshoot the HB pattern.

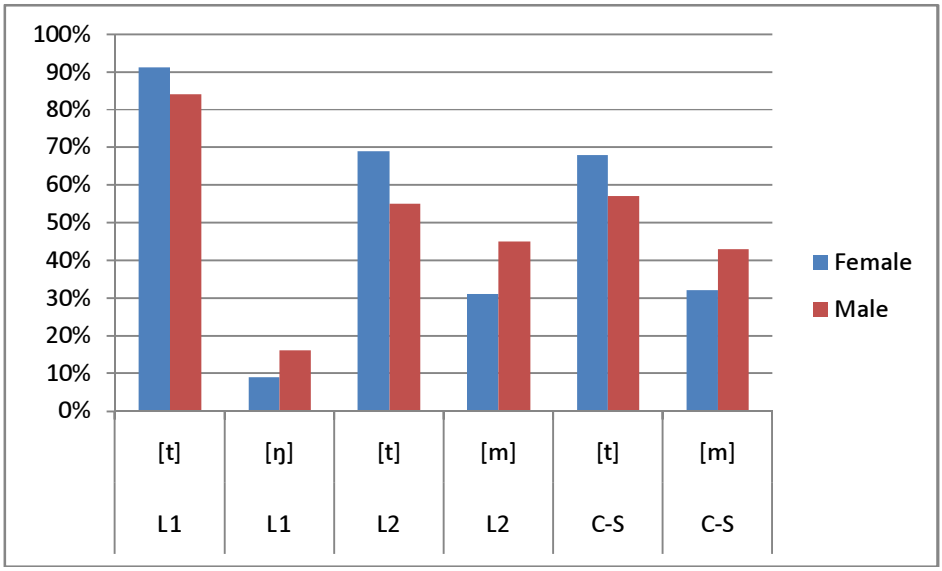



*Figure 4.8 [t], [ŋ], [m] across gender in BP*

Cross-tabulation results do not reveal any linguistic patterning of irrealis variants based on social factors such as gender, social class and education. Men and women follow similar trend across the patterns of language use. Yet, a small difference between men and women is observed. Women use [t] slightly more than men in first person subject contexts across the three codes, L1, L2 and C-S as we can see in figure 4.8. On the other hand, in second and third person subject contexts, women demonstrate higher use of [b] than men in Bengali monolingual (L2) and code-switched data (See figure 4.9). This distinction in second and third person contexts indicates the presence of gender difference in L2 and code-switches to some extent, even when this difference is not visible in L1.

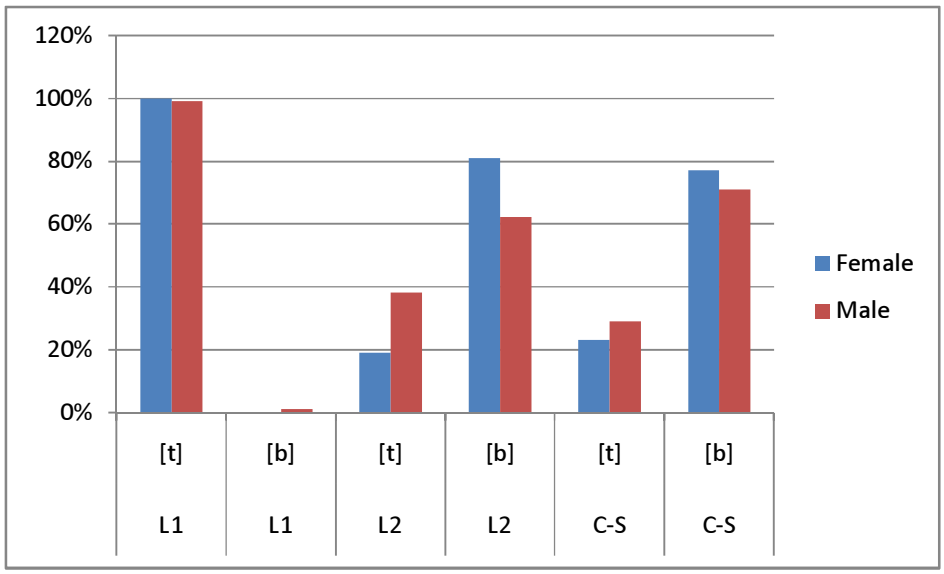



*Figure 4.9 [t] and [b] across gender in BP*

### 4.6.2 Analysis

The distribution of irrealis forms across the patterns of language use of the Bishnupriyas suggests an attempt of separation of the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code from the Bengali monolingual (L2) and code-switches. Despite the fact [t] is preferred over [ŋ] or [m] with first person subjects across the three patterns of language use, the frequency of [t] decreases in the L2 and the code-switches. This is indicative of an attempt to modify their speech according to the HB norm. A clear boundary between L1 and L2 or code-switches is observed, when the verbs occur with second or third person subjects. Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data shows almost categorical use of [t]. In L2 and code-switches, a shift towards [b], which is associated with HB, is observed. In fact, Bishnupriyas override the Bengalis in the use of [b] in L2 and code-switches. The other linguistic constraints do not operate uniformly across the three codes, and with all grammatical persons. For instance, the distinction between negative and affirmative sentences is maintained to some extent across the three codes (L1, L2 and C-S) in first person subject contexts. This distinction is however, eliminated in L1, when the verb occurs with second or third person subjects.

Cross-tabulation results did not reveal any remarkable social differentiation of irrealis variants. Nonetheless, there are a few relevant points, which emerged from cross-tabulations. It has been observed that in first person subject contexts, small children show a little inclination towards [ŋ] in L1, and on the other hand, older speakers (fifty and above) use [t] more than the younger speakers in their bilingual discourses .

**Summary**

The above discussion shows that distribution of the tense, aspect and mood forms in Bishnupriya is primarily conditioned by Bishnupriya-Bengali bilingualism, which defines the complete verbal repertoire of the Bishnupriyas. The "bilingual patterns of language use" is the dominant factor that affects variability in the tense, aspect and mood marking in BP.

BP and HB have the same past tense markers, that is [l ~ s]. However, [l] and [s] do not have similar distribution in these two varieties. In BP, [l] is preferred to [s], whereas in HB [s] is used more to indicate past tense. Cross-tabulation results show that [l] is used more with most of the linguistic factors in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech. The Bishnupriyas demonstrate a shift towards [s] in their Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched discourses. They modify their bilingual discourses according to the HB pattern. Although [s] is preferred in both L2 and code-switched data, the code-switched data shows close proximity with the HB trend. The frequency of [s] in the code-switched data even overshoots the HB pattern.

The "patterns of language use" is the only linguistic constraint which has a bearing on the variable marking in aspectual (except habitual) categories. The variability is limited to the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) discourse. The L2 and the bilingual discourses show use of the HB aspect marker. Nonetheless, the HB marker appears in the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) discourse as well.

Bishnupriya shares the irrealis variants with HB. The variant [t] is preferred over [ŋ] or [m] across the three codes in first person subject contexts. However, the frequency

of [t] slightly declines in Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data. This indicates a move towards the HB pattern, where [m] is preferred over [t]. The second and third person subject contexts show clear separation of L1 code from L2 and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. The L1 data shows overwhelming use of [t], but the L2 and bilingual discourse reveal a shift towards the HB pattern.

Cross-tabulation results suggest that Bishnupriya (L1) and the local Bengali (HB) operate as two separate grammars in the mind of Bishnupriyas. These two grammars however interact and overlap. Across the tense, aspect and mood categories, we have seen particular variant(s) characterize Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech, whereas in L2 and code-switched data, there is a shift towards the HB variant. However, the boundary between the L1 and L2 or bilingual speech is blurred. The Bishnupriyas turn towards the HB pattern in both L2 and code-switched data. In L2 speech, they partly succeed in replicating the HB pattern. The code-switched data demonstrates a complete shift towards the HB norm.

Cross-tabulations results also reveal that younger speakers and women display a little inclination towards the forms that are preferred in HB. For instance, younger speakers and women show a little more use of [s] in past tense and [b] in irrealis category. The post-graduates and small children do not engage in code-switching. Instances of code-switches are not available from small children perhaps because they have not acquired the required bilingual competence yet. The post-graduates (in my sample), despite being very well versed in HB, refrain from switches between Bishnupriya and HB. Apart from these few findings, no other significant social differentiation of linguistic patterning of TAM categories in BP could be discerned.

## Notes

[1] - in the table indicates that data is not available in that particular category. This procedure will be followed throughout Chapter IV.

[2] In table 4.1, L1 refers to Bishnupriya monolingual data, L2 refers to Bengali monolingual data (of the Bishnupriyas) and C-S refers to Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data (of the Bishnupriyas). HB refers to Bengali data of the Bengalis in Hailakandi. This will apply to all the tables in Chapter IV.

[3] The high (100%) frequency of [l] with first person plural subjects in L2 and [s] with third person plural subjects in L2 and first person plural subjects in code-switched data is because of small number of tokens present in these categories, and therefore can be ignored.

[4] In BP, all the instances of [l] in habitual category appear in generic sentences only (See Chapter III).

[5] However, the distribution of generic and non-generic sentences across speakers could not be shown in table 4.11 because of the enormity of the data.

[6] The standard Bengali here refers to Standard Literary Bengali. In Standard Bengali (both literary and colloquial) *s* is realized as *ch.*

## Chapter - V

## Summary and Conclusion

**5.0** In this dissertation, I have made an attempt to study the variation in the tense, aspect and mood marking in Bishnupriya (BP) from a bilingual perspective. The study is based on a Bishnupriya community in Hailakandi (Assam), where the Bishnupriyas co-exist with the Bengalis. Bengali is the dominant language of the district, and therefore occupies an important position in the verbal repertoire of the Bishnupriyas in Hailakandi. The main objective of this study is to understand how the grammar(s) are orchestrated in the mind of speakers in a bilingual community. I have tried to address whether the bilinguals have separate grammars for separate languages or one unified grammar for different codes. In this study, I have attempted to show whether (i) Bishnupriya and Bengali operate as one grammar or (ii) Bishnupriya and Bengali function as two independent grammars or (iii) Bishnupriya and Bengali work as interactive grammars, in the mind of the Bishnupriyas. The findings of this study indicate that though Bishnupriya and Bengali seem to operate largely as two independent grammars, the two also interact and overlap to a considerable extent.

**5.1** Chapter I provides an introduction of the dissertation. In this chapter I have given an account of the available literature on bilingualism. I have discussed the thrust areas of different phases in the study on bilingualism. The earliest literature on bilingualism focuses on the description of bilingualism and measurement of bilingualism. Then the focus shifted to the outcomes of bilingualism. Bilingualism can result in multiple outcomes such as, borrowing (Haugen 1950, 1969, Poplack et al. 1988), code-switching (Blom and Gumperz 1972, Poplack 1980, 1985, Myers-Scotton 1993, Myusken 2000), convergence (Emeneau 1956, Masica 1976), language shift (Gal 1979) and even genesis of a new language (Muhlhausler 1974, 1980, Bickerton 1984, Sankoff 1980, 1991, Satyanath 1991). The outcomes of bilingualism have been studied from different perspectives. I have discussed the focus of many such studies. I have dealt with the

research on child bilingualism as well. The literature on child bilingualism deals with primarily bilingual acquisition of languages. The discourse on child bilingualism mainly engages with the nature of relationship between the child's two languages (Leopold 1970, De Houwer 1990, Dopke 2000a, b). The debate on critical period hypothesis also assumes significance in the study of child bilingualism.

Apart from the discourse on bilingualism, I have given a summary of all the existing research on Bishnupriya. In Chapter I, I have also presented information on the Bishnupriya community and the nature of Bishnupriya-Bengali bilingualism in Hailakandi.

In addition, I have discussed the methods and approaches adopted for data collection in this study. This study was conducted using the framework of variation and change, following the methods introduced by Labov (1972, 1984). The data was gathered through two techniques: sociolinguistic interviews and participation observation. The data collected for this study comprises of three kinds of codes of the Bishnupriyas such as, (i) Bishnupriya monolingual (L1), (ii) Bengali monolingual (L2) and (iii) Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. I have also collected local Bengali (HB) data from the Bengalis in order to assess the relation and interaction between Bishnupriya (BP) and Bengali (HB).

**5.2** In chapter II, I have attempted to develop an account of the grammar and semantics of tense, aspect and mood categories, and forms that express these categories in Bishnupriya (BP) and local Bengali (HB) spoken in Hailakandi. As Bishnupriya is an outcome of contact between Eastern Indo-Aryan (primarily Bengali) and Tibeto-Burman languages (essentially Meitei), I have given a brief sketch of the tense, aspect and mood categories and forms in these relevant languages to understand the TAM system of BP. Tibeto-Burman languages make two way categorization: future versus non-future. The non-future category includes the past and the present. Various affixes are used to denote the aspectual and temporal distinctions. The Eastern Bengali varieties show tripartite classification: past, present and future.

The list of the TAM categories and the forms that denote these categories in BP and HB is given in table 5.1.[1] The tense category in BP is represented by the past tense. The past tense in both BP and HB is indicated by *l* and *s*. The forms *l* and *s* locate situations in the past without specifying the remoteness distinctions.

| **TAM Categories** | **BP TAM Forms** | **HB TAM Forms** |
|---|---|---|
| ***Tense*** | | |
| *Past Tense* | *l ~ s* | *l ~ s* |
| ***Aspect*** | | |
| *Present Progressive* | *r ~ s ~ te-s* | *r* |
| *Past Progressive* | *r* | *aat-aas-l* |
| *Future Progressive* | - | *aat-thaak-b/m* |
| *Present Habitual* | *r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s* | *Ø* |
| *Past Habitual* | *l ~ r ~ t ~ s* | *t* |
| *Past Perfect* | *sl* | *sl* |
| ***Mood (Irrealis)*** | | |
| *Future* | *t ~ ŋ ~ b ~ m* | *t ~ b ~ m* |
| *Conditional* | *t* | *t ~ b ~ m* |
| *Counterfactual* | *t ~ l-s* | *l ~ paar-t* |

*Table 5.1 TAM categories and their forms in BP and HB*

The aspect category in BP is characterized by imperfective. The habitual category in BP shows four-way marking. The habitual situations are indicated by *r*, *Ø*, *l* and *s*. In HB, habitual meaning is expressed by *Ø* only. The past habitual situations in BP are denoted by *l, r, t,* and *s,* whereas in HB *t* alone is used. The present progressive category is specified by *r, s* and *te-s* in BP. The form *r* also covers past progressive situations.

There were no instances of future progressive situations in BP data. Unlike BP, HB has separate forms for indicating present progressive, past progressive and future progressive situations. However, the present progressive is expressed by *r* in HB as well. The forms *r* and *s* combine habitual and progressive in BP. This feature can be attributed to various factors. It may be due to the influence of some Tibeo-Burman languages, where the distinction between progressive and habitual is blurred (Grierson 1903). Many contact languages (creoles) also display this feature (Winford 2000b). There are also many languages in the world, which use same form to connote both habitual and progressive meanings (See Bybee et al. 1994).

The mood category is represented by the irrealis. The irrealis category subsumes future situations, conditionals, counterfactuals and imperatives. The future situations (hypothetical and certain) are encoded by *t*, *ŋ*, *m* and *b*. The future marking in BP resembles HB. However, counterfactuals and conditionals demonstrate some digression between BP and HB. The imperatives in both the languages are not marked for TAM categories.

BP shows proximity with HB with respect to tense (past) and irrealis system. However, in the aspectual marking, BP shows deviation from HB. BP displays variability in marking of aspectual categories, which HB lacks. The delineation of the tense, aspect and mood categories and forms suggests that BP has one tense, represented by past, one aspect, that is imperfective and one mood, denoted by irrealis category. The description of the TAM categories and forms suggests that there is variability in TAM marking in BP. Multiple forms perform the same function or a single affix performs multiple functions. Since the forms are multifunctional, semantics was used as the guiding criteria for identifying the TAM categories that the forms assign.

**5.3** In Chapter III, I have provided a quantitative analysis of variable expression of tense, aspect and mood categories in BP. I have analyzed the function and significance of the various linguistic constraints in affecting the choice and distribution of TAM forms in

BP. As BP shares many of the TAM forms with HB, the linguistic constraints in BP are discussed along with HB, to evaluate the relationship between the two systems.

The past tense forms [l ~ s] were coded for seven linguistic constraints such as:

(i) Patterns of language use
(ii) Grammatical person of the subject
(iii) Degree of remoteness
(iv) Grammatical clauses
(v) Negation
(vi) Stativity
(vii) Lexical category.

All the seven constraints turned out to be significant for BP. However, in HB only two (grammatical person of the subject and stativity) out of the six constraints were found to be significant.[2]

The linguistic constraint "patterns of language use" which encompasses the total linguistic repertoire (L1, L2 and code-switches) of the Bishnupriyas turned out to be the strongest constraint on the past tense forms in BP. Quantitative analysis indicates that [l] is favoured more in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data, whereas [s] is preferred in Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data of the Bishnupriyas. This constraint was not applicable for the past tense forms in HB. The next important constraint is "grammatical clauses". In BP, conditional and adverbial clauses choose [l] over [s]. On the other hand, the relative and interrogative clauses display more use of [s]. This constraint is not significant for the past tense markers in HB. However, the conditional clauses in HB also demonstrate preference for [l].

The third significant constraint "grammatical person of the subject" is shared between BP and HB. Yet the effects of the constraints are not synonymous in both the languages.

Negative sentences display a strong preference for [s], but the affirmative sentences slightly favour [l]. This linguistic pattern is visible in HB as well. However, the probability of use of [s] in negative sentences in BP is higher than HB.

A connection between stativity and the choice of past form exists both in BP and in HB. The stative verbs demonstrate very high tendency to use [s] over [l]. In contrast, the non-stative verbs show slightly more use of [l].

The past tense forms [l] and [s] distinguish the remote past from the recent past and immediate past contexts to some degree in BP. [l] is favoured more in remote past situations, whereas [s] is selected more in immediate past and recent past contexts. The past forms in HB do not categorize this distinction.

Quantitative analysis demonstrated that "patterns of language use" is the most salient constraint on the BP past tense forms. The distribution of the past tense forms [l] and [s] in BP and HB demonstrates a reverse trend. The linguistic constraints operating on the past tense forms in these two systems are not same. Nevertheless, there are a few constraints such as, stativity and negation that condition the past tense forms in BP and HB in a similar pattern.

**5.3.1** In the habitual category, variability between the four markers [r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s] is in the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data alone. Despite the presence of four forms, [r] indicates a majority of the habitual situations. The other three forms [Ø ~ l ~ s] designate a small percentage the habitual situations. Two linguistic constraints, such as, (i) patterns of language use and (ii) generic and non-generic distinction condition the variability in the habitual category. The habitual forms [l] and [s] occur in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech only, but [r] and [Ø] appear in all the three codes, L1, L2 and code-switches. Quantitative analysis demonstrates that [r] is favoured more in the L1 data. The other two kinds of data, L2 and code-switches show near categorical use of [Ø], which is the HB form. The habitual markers trigger a split between the generic and non-generic sentences.

The variant [l] occurs only in generic sentences, but the variants [r] and [s] occur more in non-generic sentences.

The "patterns of language use" is the only constraint that causes variability in the past habitual and present progressive category. The variability between past habitual markers [r ~ l ~ t ~ s] is in the Bishnupriya monolingual data alone. The Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data show use of the HB form [t] alone, thereby suggesting a complete shift to HB. Although three variants [r ~ s ~ te-s] surface in the present progressive category, [r] marks a majority of the situations connoting present progressive meaning. However, a few instances of [s] appear in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data, and [te-s] in L2 and code-switched data. Apart from the patterns of language use, connection between any other linguistic factor and past habitual or present progressive forms could not be established.

**5.3.2** In the irrealis category, future events and conditionals were considered in the multivariate analysis. The instances of counterfactuals were very few and so it was not included. BP and HB have the same irrealis markers. There are four linguistic constraints, which condition the frequency and choice of irrealis variants in BP. These constraints are (i) patterns of language use, (ii) grammatical person of the subject, (iii) hypothetical/certain distinction and (iv) negation. The patterns of language use turned out to be a powerful constraint on irrealis variants as well. The pattern of irrealis marking demonstrates an attempt to separate the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech from the Bengali monolingual (L2) and bilingual discourses, that is, code-switches. The form [t] is selected more in L1, whereas [b] is overwhelmingly used in Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. Similarly [ŋ] and [m] make a clear distinction between the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code and the Bengal monolingual (L2) or the code-switched speech. The variant [ŋ] is used only in L1, whereas [m] appears in L2 and bilingual alternations. The Bishnupriyas identify [b] with HB, despite the fact that the overall pattern of irrealis marking in HB data do not show any preference for [b]. A relation between irrealis markers [t ~ b ~ ŋ ~ m] and person marking is found in both BP and HB. The variant [t] occurs with every grammatical person (first, second and third)

and [b] appears with second and third person subjects. The forms [ŋ] and [m] occur with first person subject only. The variant [m] is realized as [ŋ] in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech. Apart from first person singular subjects, all the other subjects, especially the plural ones show preference for [t]. The low probability of use of [t] in first person subject contexts may be because of the categorical use of [ŋ] and [m] in this context. Unlike BP, the plural subjects in HB do not demonstrate preference for [t]. In contrast, in HB, first person plural subjects select [m] more and third person plural subject use [b] more.

BP and HB demonstrate a similar distribution of [t] and [n/m] in the hypothetical and certain or definite situations. The hypothetical situations favour [t] more, but the certain situations select [ŋ/m] more. However, BP and HB vary with regard to the distribution of [b]. The effect of negation on the irrealis variants is same in both BP and HB.

Quantitative analysis demonstrates that "patterns of language use" is the strongest constraint responsible for conditioning variability in the tense, aspect and mood marking in BP. This constraint operates across the tense, aspect and mood categories. In fact, in the aspect category (except habitual), it is the only constraint that triggers variability in marking. The effect of this constraint underscores the fact that the tense, aspect and mood forms in BP make an attempt to differentiate the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code from the Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya-Bengali code-switched speech. Bishnupriyas identify some of the TAM variant (s) with Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code and some with Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. However, these forms overlap in all the three codes.

Even though BP and HB share many of the TAM forms, their distribution in these two languages are not same. The nature and effects of the constraints on the TAM forms in BP and HB are not identical either. Nonetheless, there are a few constraints, which are common to both BP and HB. The findings of quantitative analysis suggest that BP and HB constitute overlapping and yet two independent systems.

**5.4** In Chapter IV, I have cross-tabulated the TAM variants by patterns of language use and other linguistic and social constraints to explore the relationship of the patterns of language use with other constraints, linguistic as well as social.

The overall findings of cross-tabulation suggest that in the past tense category, [l] is used more with most of the constraints in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data. The Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data show greater use of [s] and reduction in the use of [l], indicating a shift towards the HB pattern. Although Bishnupriyas modify their speech according to the HB pattern in both Bengali monolingual (L2) and code-switched discourses, they succeed in L2 to some extent only. The code-switched data reveals a complete shift towards the HB norm. The Bishnupriyas even exceed the Bengalis in the use of [s] when they alternate between BP and HB. The effects of different constraints are not consistent across the three codes. For instance, in the factor group "grammatical person of the subject" [l] is preferred with every grammatical person in L1. The frequency of [l] however slightly declines in the slot for third person singular subjects. As a result, there is slight increase in the frequency of [s] in this code (L1). This small decrease in the use of [l] and slight increase in the frequency of [s] in third person singular subject contexts is in agreement with the results of multivariate analysis, to some extent. L2 data does not follow this constraint. However, in code-switches the highest use of [s] is recorded with third person singular subjects.

The cross-tabulations of irrealis variants show that with first person subject, [t] is preferred across the three codes that is, L1, L2 and code-switches. However, the frequency of [t] decreases in L2 and code-switched data, suggesting a move towards HB, which shows higher use of [m]. The second person and third person subject contexts demonstrate a demarcation of Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) and the Bengali monolingual (L2) or bilingual discourses. The L1 data shows almost categorical marking by [t], whereas the L2 and code-switched data show preference for [b], which is the HB pattern.[3] The use of [b] in L2 and code-switched data of the Bishnupriyas overshoots the frequency of [b] in HB.

The pattern of marking of the tense, aspect and mood categories across the different patterns of language use (L1, L2 and C-S) throws light on the relationship and nature of interaction between BP and HB. Studies on child bilingualism have dealt with the issue of relationship between the different languages with regard to bilingual acquisition (Dopke 2000b). Recent studies provide evidence for language separation as well as cross-linguistic influences in bilingual children (See Dopke 2000b: 100). Even though BP and HB have many common TAM markers, cross-tabulation results demonstrate the distance between BP and HB as reflected in the linguistic patterning of TAM categories. The pattern of TAM marking in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code reflects a conspicuous difference from Bengali monolingual (L2) code and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. The Bengali monolingual (L2) code and Bishnupriya to Bengali alternations show a shift towards the HB pattern. The Bengali monolingual (L2) data displays an incomplete shift towards the HB trend. The L2 data though shows a turn towards the direction of HB, the effects of linguistic constraints operating in BP are echoed in L2 speech to some extent. The Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches demonstrate a complete shift towards the HB pattern. The three linguistic codes of Bishnupriyas, that is, L1, L2 and code-switches form a continuum representing the linguistic competence of the bilingual Bishnupriyas. On one end, lies the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code, and on the other extreme is the Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches, which shows complete convergence with HB. The Bengali monolingual (L2) code in between is closer to HB, but shows interaction with Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code.

**5.5** The quantitative analysis elucidates the nature and extent of variability both within and across the tense, aspect and mood categories in BP. It also provides an account of the linguistic factors that condition the variability in the tense, aspect and mood categories in BP. The quantitative analysis of the tense, aspect and mood forms in BP and HB helped us to understand the nature of interaction between the two language systems. The use of a bilingual framework in this study allowed us to understand the arrangement of grammars of the various codes that constitutes the linguistic competence of the bilinguals. For the Bishnupriyas, Bishnupriya and HB represent two separate linguistic systems, which

correspond with each other. Within the bilingual discourse too, Bishnupriyas make a distinction between the L2 code and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. The difference in linguistic patterning of L2 and codes-switches may be due to two reasons. Bishnupriyas want to maintain some gap between their Bengali and the Bengali of the local Bengalis, while interacting in L2. In code-switches, they want to disambiguate the Bishnupriya segment from the HB segment. Therefore, they replicate the HB pattern or even exceed the HB trend while code-switching. Studies on code-switching have talked about ambiguous alternations, where it is difficult to separate the different codes. BP exploits different TAM markers to disambiguate such alternations.

Social factors were not significant for conditioning variability in the TAM marking. Nevertheless, a few points relating to the social dimension of variability in TAM forms in BP emerge from cross-tabulations. The younger speakers and women though follow the trend of the community show a slight inclination towards the HB norms. Perhaps higher education restrains Bishnupriya to Bengali alternations. No instances of code-switches emerged in the speech of post-graduates. Moreover, women indulge in code-switches more than men. The women in Bishnupriya community have less education in comparison to men.

Finally, as this is the first study of Bishnupriya speech community in a bilingual framework, it has its share of shortcomings as well. One of the shortcomings stems from the difficulties in eliciting bilingual data itself. As a result, bilingual data is not uniformly distributed across speakers. Poplack et al. (1988: 49) point out the problems in elicitation of bilingual data and report that only a small fraction of bilingual data emerges even in massive corpus of speech data from a well representative sample. Perhaps a perception test in future may help in determining the social meanings attached to the three codes of the Bishnupriyas.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that the findings presented in this dissertation would contribute to the understanding of bilingualism in complex speech communities.

## Notes

[1] This table is reproduced from Chapter II (Table 2.6).

[2] In HB, there were six constraints as "patterns of language use" was not applicable.

[3] The overall distribution of the irrealis variants in HB does not show preference for [b] (See table 3.24 in Chapter III). However, the distribution of irrealis variants with the different linguistic factors demonstrates higher use of [b] in HB (See Chapter IV).

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## Appendix – I

## Social Class Index

In the present study, social class index was constructed based on parameters such as occupation, education, housing and amount of land one possessed. The different parameters are discussed below:

### (I) Occupation

The occupational ranks were determined by five categories based on the prestige they are ascribed by the local people. The occupational ranks are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Professor, Doctor, Engineer, Lawyer, Civil Servant | 5 |
| School Teacher | 4 |
| Army, Police | 3 |
| Self-employed: Business, Contractor | 2 |
| Farmer, Carpenter, Driver | 1 |

### (II) Education

Six levels of education were considered following the local education system. These are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Post-Graduate | 6 |
| Graduate | 5 |
| Studying in college or attended college but could not complete | 4 |
| High School (Class VIII - X) | 3 |
| Middle School (Class V-VII) | 2 |
| Lower Primary School (I-IV) | 1 |

**(III) House**

The size and type of the house were also considered. Three categories of houses were observed in the Bishnupriya enclave. These are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Big RCC house | 3 |
| Brick house but not plastered | 2 |
| Mud and straw house | 1 |

**(IV) Possession of agricultural land**

This category was considered based on the size of the land the speakers possessed.

| | |
|---|---|
| Possessed large agricultural land holdings | 3 |
| Possessed some agricultural land holdings | 2 |
| Possessed no agricultural land holdings | 1 |

The social class index was calculated on the basis of the sum of the total score. An individual's index was calculated by taking the total of the scores for each factor. Small children and women were rated on the basis of their parents and spouse's rankings. Three strata of social class were constructed on the basis of the individual's ratings. With the help of individual's ratings, an average of the entire family was calculated.

## Appendix – II

### Details of Bishnupriya Speakers

| No. | Name | ID | Age | Gender | Social-Class | Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Nany | Q | 91 | F | LC | LP |
| 2. | Satyendra | S | 81 | M | UMC | Graduate |
| 3. | Sharat | O | 80 | M | MC | MS |
| 4. | Indra | i | 79 | M | MC | Graduate |
| 5. | Lilavati | l | 68 | F | MC | MS |
| 6. | Janki | j | 66 | F | MC | MS |
| 7. | Bojendra | 2 | 59 | M | MC | PG |
| 8. | Chandra | c | 58 | M | UMC | PG |
| 9. | Bhawani | R | 56 | F | UMC | HS |
| 10. | Virmani | f | 56 | M | LC | College |
| 11. | Anu | z | 54 | F | MC | College |
| 12. | Namita | N | 54 | F | MC | MS |
| 13. | Sandya | 4 | 52 | F | UMC | MS |
| 14. | Padma | E | 51 | F | MC | MS |
| 15. | Debobala | A | 50 | F | MC | College |
| 16. | Deven | d | 49 | M | MC | Graduate |
| 17. | Ramen | D | 49 | M | MC | Graduate |
| 18. | Arun | a | 45 | M | MC | Graduate |
| 19. | Sunil | U | 42 | M | MC | Graduate |
| 20. | Mama | r | 41 | M | LC | Graduate |
| 21. | Java | 1 | 40 | F | LC | MS |
| 22. | Renu | Y | 40 | F | MC | HS |
| 23. | Gita | t | 38 | F | UMC | College |
| 24. | Raju | p | 31 | M | MC | PG |
| 25. | Ranajit | h | 30 | M | MC | PG |
| 26. | Gayatri | G | 30 | F | MC | College |
| 27. | Pravin | 7 | 29 | M | MC | Graduate |
| 28. | Milan | m | 29 | M | UMC | PG |
| 29. | Gauri | g | 27 | F | MC | College |
| 30. | Suchitra | x | 26 | M | MC | Graduate |
| 31. | Shekhar | n | 25 | M | MC | Graduate |
| 32. | Shefali | s | 24 | F | MC | College |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33. | Preeti | P | 22 | F | MC | College |
| 34. | Vibha | v | 22 | F | MC | College |
| 35. | Vikram | w | 19 | M | MC | College |
| 36. | Urmila | u | 18 | F | LC | HS |
| 37. | Johny | k | 18 | M | MC | HS |
| 38. | Minakshi | 3 | 17 | F | MC | HS |
| 39. | Babli | b | 17 | F | LC | HS |
| 40. | Monika | q | 17 | F | MC | HS |
| 41. | Palash | o | 16 | M | MC | HS |
| 42. | Konika | 6 | 14 | F | MC | HS |
| 43. | Prasenjit | B | 11 | M | MC | MS |
| 44. | Mohitush | e | 11 | M | UMC | MS |
| 45. | Dipu | J | 8 | M | MC | LP |
| 46. | Dipti | K | 7 | F | MC | LP |
| 47. | Vijaya | 9 | 6 | F | MC | LP |
| 48. | Sunny | 8 | 5 | M | LC | LP |
| 49. | Sonia | M | 4 | F | MC | LP |

The names of speakers are pseudo-names.

## Appendix – III

## Details of Bengali Speakers

| No. | Name | Age | Gender | Social-Class | Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Dadu | 75 | M | MC | Graduate |
| 2. | Dida | 70 | F | MC | MS |
| 3. | Nana | 60 | M | UMC | Graduate |
| 4. | Badal | 55 | M | MC | HS |
| 5. | Bhai | 50 | M | MC | Graduate |
| 6. | Aman | 45 | M | MC | College |
| 7. | Rabi | 40 | F | MC | College |
| 8. | Reena | 35 | F | MC | Graduate |
| 9. | Naved | 20 | M | MC | College |
| 10. | Sheema | 20 | F | MC | College |
| 11. | Moni | 15 | F | MC | HS |
| 12. | Baby | 9 | F | MC | LP |

The names of speakers are pseudo-names.

## Appendix - IV

### Part - A

### Coding Scheme for (Past Tense): Linguistic Factors

**1. Dependent Variables (Past Tense)**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) | [l] |
| (ii) | [s] |

**2. Patterns of language use**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data | 2 |
| (ii) Bengali monolingual (L2) data | 1 |
| (iii) Bishnupriya-Bengali code-switched data | 3 |

**3. Grammatical person of the subject**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) I Person Singular | 1 |
| (ii) II Person Singular | 2 |
| (iii) III Person Singular | 3 |
| (iv) I Person Plural | 4 |
| (v) II Person Plural | 5 |
| (vi) III Person Plural | 6 |

**4. Grammatical clauses**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Conditional-Consequent clauses | c |
| (ii) Adverbial clauses | a |
| (iii) Relative-Correlative clauses | r |
| (iv) Interrogative clauses | i |
| (v) "Other" types of clauses | o |

**5. Degree of Remoteness**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Immediate Past | 1 |
| (ii) Recent Past | 2 |
| (iii) Remote Past | 3 |

**6. Negation**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Negative sentence | b |
| (ii) Affirmative Sentence | n |

**7. Stativity**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Stative | s |
| (ii) Non-Stative | n |

**8. Lexical category**

(Each lexical item was coded separately and not under any group)

## Appendix - IV

## Part - B

## Coding Scheme for (Habitual): Linguistic Factors

**1. Dependent Variables (Habitual)**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) | [r] |
| (ii) | [Ø] |
| (iii) | [l] |
| (iv) | [s] |

**2. Patterns of language use**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data | 2 |
| (ii) Bengali monolingual (L2) data | 1 |
| (iii) Bishnupriya-Bengali code-switched data | 3 |

**3. Generic**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Generic | g |
| (ii) Non-Generic | n |

## Appendix - IV

## Part - C

### Coding Scheme for (Past Habitual): Linguistic Factors

**1. Dependent Variables (Past Habitual)**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) | [l] |
| (ii) | [r] |
| (iii) | [t] |
| (iv) | [s] |

**2. Patterns of language use**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data | 2 |
| (ii) Bengali monolingual (L2) data | 1 |
| (iii) Bishnupriya-Bengali code-switched data | 3 |

## Appendix - IV

## Part - D

### Coding Scheme for (Present Progressive): Linguistic Factors

**1. Dependent Variables (Present Progressive)**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) | [r] |
| (ii) | [s] |
| (iii) | [te-s] |

**2. Patterns of language use**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data | 2 |
| (ii) Bengali monolingual (L2) data | 1 |
| (iii) Bishnupriya-Bengali code-switched data | 3 |

## Appendix - IV

## Part - E

## Coding Scheme for (Irrealis): Linguistic Factors

**1. Dependent Variables (Irrealis)**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) | [t] |
| (ii) | [b] |
| (iii) | [ŋ] |
| (v) | [m] |

**2. Patterns of language use**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data | 2 |
| (ii) Bengali monolingual (L2) data | 1 |
| (iii) Bishnupriya-Bengali code-switched data | 3 |

**3. Grammatical person of the subject**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) I Person Singular | 1 |
| (ii) II Person Singular | 2 |
| (iii) III Person Singular | 3 |
| (iv) I Person Plural | 4 |
| (v) II Person Plural | 5 |
| (vi) III Person Plural | 6 |

**4. Nature of the situation**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Hypothetical | h |
| (ii) Certain or Definite | d |

**5. Negation**

| | |
|---|---|
| (i) Negative sentence | n |
| (ii) Affirmative sentence | a |

## Appendix - V

### Coding Scheme: Social Factors

All the TAM Variables in Bishnupriya were coded for the social factors cited below:

**1. Age (years)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | 4-10 | 1 |
| (ii) | 11-19 | 2 |
| (iii) | 20-35 | 3 |
| (iv) | 36-49 | 4 |
| (v) | 50-59 | 5 |
| (vi) | 60 and above | 6 |

**2. Gender**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Male | m |
| (ii) | Female | f |

**3. Social Class**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Upper Middle Class (UMC) | 1 |
| (ii) | Middle Class (MC) | 2 |
| (iii) | Lower Class (LC) | 3 |

**4. Education**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Lower Primary (LP) | l |
| (ii) | Middle School (MS) | m |
| (iii) | High School (HS) | h |
| (iv) | College (COL) | c |
| (v) | Graduate (GRAD) | g |
| (vi) | Post-Graduate (PG) | p |

## Appendix - VI

### Probability of Past Tense Variants for Social Factors

| BP | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Social Factors** | **(Past Tense)** | |
| **1. Age (Years)** | **[l]** | **[s]** |
| 4-10 | 0.48 | 0.51 |
| 11-19 | 0.47 | 0.52 |
| 20-35 | 0.48 | 0.51 |
| 36-49 | 0.50 | 0.49 |
| 50-59 | 0.51 | 0.48 |
| 60 + | 0.51 | 0.47 |
| | | |
| **2. Gender** | | |
| Female (f) | 0.49 | 0.50 |
| Male (m) | 0.50 | 0.49 |
| | | |
| **3. Social Class** | | |
| Upper Middle Class (UMC) | 0.48 | 0.51 |
| Middle Class (MC) | 0.50 | 0.49 |
| Lower Class (LC) | 0.51 | 0.49 |
| | | |
| **4. Education** | | |
| Post-Graduate (PG) | 0.50 | 0.49 |
| Graduate (GRAD) | 0.51 | 0.48 |
| College (COL) | 0.50 | 0.49 |
| High School (HS) | 0.49 | 0.50 |
| Middle School (MS) | 0.43 | 0.56 |
| Lower Primary (LP) | 0.55 | 0.44 |
| | | |

## Appendix - VII

## Probability of Habitual Variants for Social Factors

| BP | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Social Factors** | **(Habitual)** | | | |
| **1. Age (Years)** | **[r]** | **[Ø]** | **[l]** | **[s]** |
| 4-10 | 0.49 | 0.54 | - | - |
| 11-19 | 0.64 | 0.38 | 0.42 | 0.51 |
| 20-35 | 0.42 | 0.57 | 0.54 | 0.49 |
| 36-49 | 0.47 | 0.53 | 0.55 | 0.51 |
| 50-59 | 0.46 | 0.54 | 0.43 | 0.49 |
| 60 + | 0.47 | 0.44 | 0.53 | 0.53 |
| | | | | |
| **2. Gender** | | | | |
| Female | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.48 | 0.50 |
| Male | 0.49 | 0.49 | 0.53 | 0.49 |
| | | | | |
| **3. Social Class** | | | | |
| Upper Middle Class (UMC) | 0.50 | 0.50 | - | 0.49 |
| Middle Class (MC) | 0.50 | 0.49 | 100% | 0.50 |
| Lower Class (LC) | 0.47 | 0.51 | - | - |
| | | | | |
| **4. Education** | | | | |
| Post-Graduate (PG) | 0.58 | 0.36 | - | - |
| Graduate (GRAD) | 0.56 | 0.44 | 0.50 | 0.53 |
| College (COL) | 0.57 | 0.52 | 0.48 | 0.54 |
| High School (HS) | 0.43 | 0.53 | - | 0.53 |
| Middle School (MS) | 0.42 | 0.47 | 0.51 | 0.47 |
| Lower Primary (LP) | 0.41 | 0.58 | - | - |
| | | | | |

- No Data

## Appendix - VIII

### Probability of Past Habitual Variants for Social Factors

| BP | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Social Factors** | **(Past Habitual)** | | |
| 1**. Age (Years**) | **[l]** | **[r]** | **[t]** |
| 4-10 | - | - | - |
| 11- 19 | 0.56 | 0.45 | - |
| 20-35 | 0.47 | 0.51 | 0.51 |
| 36-49 | 0.48 | 0.51 | 0.52 |
| 50-59 | 0.55 | 0.47 | 0.45 |
| 60 + | 0.49 | 0.49 | 0.51 |
| | | | |
| **2. Gender** | | | |
| Female | 0.49 | 0.49 | 0.49 |
| Male | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.50 |
| | | | |
| **3. Social Class** | | | |
| Upper Middle Class (UMC) | 0.47 | 0.56 | 0.25 |
| Middle Class (MC) | 0.51 | 0.46 | 0.51 |
| Lower Class (LC) | 0.40 | 0.72 | 0.47 |
| | | | |
| **4. Education** | | | |
| Post-Graduate (PG) | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.47 |
| Graduate (GRAD) | 0.48 | 0.50 | 0.51 |
| College (COL) | 0.48 | 0.58 | 0.45 |
| High School (HS) | 0.59 | 0.12 | 0.79 |
| Middle School (MS) | 0.53 | 0.54 | 0.45 |
| Lower Primary (LP) | - | - | - |
| | | | |

- No Data

## Appendix - IX

### Probability of Irrealis Variants for Social Factors

| BP | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Social Factors** | **(Irrealis)** | | | |
| **1. Age (Years)** | **[t]** | **[b]** | **[ŋ]** | **[m]** |
| 4-10 | 0.50 | - | 0.50 | - |
| 11-19 | 0.43 | 0.60 | 0.54 | 0.4% |
| 20-35 | 0.57 | 0.38 | 0.41 | 2.4% |
| 36-49 | 0.55 | 0.30 | 0.52 | 1.6% |
| 50-59 | 0.44 | 0.60 | 0.50 | 0.8% |
| 60 + | 0.50 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 0.4% |
| | | | | |
| **2. Gender** | | | | |
| Female | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.48 | 1.3% |
| Male | 0.47 | 0.50 | 0.52 | 0.8% |
| | | | | |
| **3. Social Class** | | | | |
| Upper Middle Class (UMC) | 0.53 | 0.39 | 0.48 | - |
| Middle Class (MC) | 0.48 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 1.4% |
| Lower Class (LC) | 0.55 | 0.83 | 0.49 | 0.5% |
| | | | | |
| **4. Education** | | | | |
| Post-Graduate (PG) | 0.47 | 0.52 | 0.55 | 1% |
| Graduate (GRAD) | 0.53 | 0.49 | 0.46 | 1% |
| College (COL) | 0.44 | 0.52 | 0.54 | 1.7% |
| High School (HS) | 0.57 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 1.3% |
| Middle School (MS) | 0.49 | 0.44 | 0.51 | 0.3% |
| Lower Primary (LP) | 0.27 | - | 0.66 | - |
| | | | | |

- No Data

Frequency of [m] is given as probability of [m] could not be obtained

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# STUDY OF VARIATION AND CHANGE IN A BILINGUAL CONTEXT: THE CASE OF BISHNUPRIYA

**SYNOPSIS**

**SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DELHI ALONG WITH THE THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**IN**

**LINGUISTICS**

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**DELHI-110007**

**2011**

This dissertation is a study of the Bishnupriya speech community from the standpoint of bilingualism. Bishnupriya is a contact language, which emerged as an outcome of interactions between varieties of Eastern Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman in Manipur (See Laskar 2003, Satyanath and Laskar 2008). This study is based on the Bishnupriya speech community in the Hailakandi district of Assam. Bengali is the dominant as well as the official language of Hailakandi district, besides being one of the major languages that contributed to the formation of Bishnupriya. Thus, the Bishnupriyas living in Hailakandi are bilingual having competence in both Bishnupriya and Bengali. Bengali plays an important role in defining the verbal repertoire of the Bishnupriyas. Through the study of the tense, aspect and mood categories, and forms that expresses these categories in Bishnupriya, this study addresses issues relating to the relationship and interaction between the various languages in the bilinguals in a bilingual community. In other words, this study throws light on whether the linguistic competence of the bilingual Bishnupriyas represent Bishnupriya and Bengali as two separate grammars or as one unified grammar or as an interactive grammar. The findings of this study indicate that though Bishnupriya and Bengali seem to operate largely as two independent grammars, the two also interact and overlap to a considerable extent.

Chapter I provides the theoretical and methodological framework adopted in this study. This study was conducted using the framework of variation and change, following the methods introduced by Labov (1972, 1984). The data was gathered with the help of two techniques: sociolinguistic interviews and participation observation. Three kinds of linguistic codes constitute the speech data of the Bishnupriyas. These are (i) Bishnupriya (L1) data, (ii) Bengali (L2) data and (iii) Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data. The local Bengali (HB) data from the Bengalis was also garnered in order to assess the relation and interaction between Bishnupriya (BP) and Bengali (HB).

This chapter gives an account of the available literature on bilingualism, child bilingualism and Bishnupriya as well. The thrust areas of different phases in the study on bilingualism are discussed. In addition, there is information on the Bishnupriya speech

community, and the nature of Bishnupriya-Bengali bilingualism in Hailakandi in this chapter.

Chapter II develops an account of the grammar and semantics of tense (T), aspect (A) and mood (M) categories, and forms that express these categories in Bishnupriya (henceforth BP) and local Bengali (henceforth HB) spoken in Hailakandi. BP, being a contact language with roots in many Eastern Indo-Aryan (primarily Eastern Bengali) and Tibeto-Burman (essentially Meitei) languages, brief summaries of the tense, aspect and mood categories and forms in these relevant languages are given as well. This allows us to understand the TAM system of BP. The Tibeto-Burman languages demonstrate two-way classification: future versus non-future. The non-future category includes the past and the present. The Eastern Bengali varieties show tripartite classification: past, present and future. BP possesses features of both Eastern Bengali and Tibeto-Burman.

BP has one tense, that is, the past tense, one aspect represented by imperfective categories and one mood characterized by the irrealis categories. BP shares the past tense forms with HB, that is, the past tense is expressed by *l* and *s* in both these languages. The forms *l* and *s* only locate situations in the past without indicating the remoteness distinctions.

Unlike HB, the imperfective categories in BP show variability in marking. In BP, there are four possibilities for encoding habitual category. BP uses *r*, *Ø*, *l* and *s* to indicate habitual meaning, whereas HB utilizes only *Ø* to connote the same. The past habitual situations in BP also demonstrate four-way variability. In BP, the forms *l*, *r*, *t*, and *s* express past habitual category, whereas in HB *t* alone is used. The present progressive category is indicated by *r*, *s* and *te-s* in BP. The form *r* extends to past progressive situations as well. HB uses separate forms to indicate progressive situations located in the past, present and future. However, the form *r* conveys present progressive meaning in HB as well.

The forms *r* and *s* conflate habitual and progressive in BP. This feature can be attributed to many factors. It may be the influence of some Tibeo-Burman languages, where the

distinction between progressive and habitual is not maintained (Grierson 1903). There are many contact languages, which display this feature (Winford 2000). It has been observed that there are many languages in the world, which use same form to convey both habitual and progressive meanings (See Bybee et al. 1994).

The irrealis category encompasses future situations, conditionals, counterfactuals and imperatives in BP. The forms *t, ŋ, m* and *b* are employed to indicate the future (hypothetical and certain) situations. The variant *t* extends to conditional and counterfactual as well. The counterfactual situations are conveyed by the sequence of *ls* as well. BP resembles HB with regard to the marking of future situations. But counterfactual and conditional show some differences between BP and HB. The imperatives in both the languages are not marked for TAM categories.

BP shows some affinity with HB with regard to the past tense and the irrealis marking. However, the pattern of imperfective marking in both these languages, suggests that BP deviates from HB when it comes to the expression of imperfective aspect categories. The delineation of the TAM categories and forms reveal that there is variability in TAM marking in BP. On one hand multiple forms are used to denote the same function and on the other hand, multiple functions are denoted by a single affix. Considering the multifunctionality of forms in BP, semantics was used as the guiding principle for determining the TAM categories assigned by these forms in particular contexts.

Chapter III provides a quantitative analysis of variable expression of tense, aspect and mood categories in BP. The effects and significance of the various linguistic constraints in conditioning the choice and distribution of TAM forms in BP and HB are analyzed. BP and HB share many of the TAM forms, so the linguistic constraints in BP are discussed along with HB, to understand the relationship between the two language systems. The quantitative analysis was done by utilizing the multivariable rule program Goldvarb 3.0b3 (Rand and Sankoff 2001).

**Tense**: Considering the insights developed from the qualitative analysis, the data of past tense was coded for seven linguistic constraints such as:

(i) Patterns of language use
(ii) Grammatical person of the subject
(iii) Degree of remoteness
(iv) Grammatical clauses
(v) Negation
(vi) Stativity
(vii) Lexical category.

In BP, all the seven linguistic constraints turned out to be significant, whereas in HB two (grammatical person of the subject and stativity) constraints were considered as significant in the multivariate analysis.

The linguistic constraint "patterns of language use" that constitutes the total linguistic repertoire (L1, L2 and code-switches) of the Bishnupriyas turned out to be the most significant constraint on the past tense forms in BP. The significance of the patterns of language use on the past forms in BP implies that [l] is favoured more in Bishnupriya (L1) data, whereas [s] is preferred in Bengali (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data of the Bishnupriyas. This constraint was not applicable for the past tense forms in HB.

The results of the quantitative analysis demonstrated that the constraints operating on the past tense forms [l ~ s] in BP and HB are not identical. For instance, "grammatical clauses" that turned out to be the second important constraint on the past tense forms in BP, was not significant for HB. The past tense forms [l] and [s] distinguish the remote past from the recent past and immediate past contexts to some extent in BP. But these forms do not differentiate remote past from recent or immediate past contexts in HB.

However, the constraints, stativity and negation condition variability in the past tense forms in BP and HB in a similar way.

**Aspect**: In the imperfective category of past habitual and present progressive, the "patterns of language use" is the sole constraint that triggers variability in marking. The variability within the past habitual category is in the Bishnupriya (L1) data alone. The Bishnupriyas use the HB form [t] alone to indicate the past habitual situations in their Bengali (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data. This suggests that the Bishnupriyas completely shift to HB norm in their L2 and Bishnupriya to Bengali switches.

Despite the presence of three variants [r ~ s ~ te-s] in the present progressive category in BP, [r] indicates a majority of the situations in this category. Yet, [r] faces a slight alternation from [s] in L1 data, and from [te-s] in L2 and code-switched data.

The variability in the habitual category in BP is conditioned by two constraints: patterns of language use and generic and non-generic distinction. The forms [l] and [s] appear in L1 data only, but [r] alternates with [Ø] in all the three codes, L1, L2 and code-switches. Quantitative analysis revealed that the variant [r] is favoured more in the L1 data. The L2 and code-switched data show near categorical use of the HB habitual marker [Ø]. The habitual markers draw a distinction between the generic and non-generic sentences. The variant [l] occurs only in generic sentences, whereas the variants [r] and [s] surface more in non-generic sentences. The variant [Ø] appears more in L2 and code-switched data, where the distinction between generic and non-generic is not significant.

**Mood**: There are four linguistic constraints which condition variability in the irrealis categories in BP. These constraints are (i) patterns of language use, (ii) grammatical person of the subject, (iii) hypothetical/certain distinction and (iv) negation. The linguistic constraint "patterns of language use" turned out to be a salient constraint on irrealis variants as well. The form [t] is selected more in L1, whereas [b] is favoured more in Bengali (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. Similarly [ŋ] and [m] draws a

distinction between the L1 code and the L2 or the code-switched speech. The form [ŋ] is used only in L1, whereas [m] appears in L2 and bilingual alternations.

There is an agreement between irrealis markers [t ~ b ~ ŋ ~ m] and person marking in both BP and HB. The variant [t] occurs with every grammatical person (first, second and third) and [b] appears with second and third person subjects. The forms [ŋ] and [m] surface with first person subject only. The variant [m] is realized as [ŋ] in L1 data. The form [t] is favoured in every subject (especially the plural subjects) contexts, but first person subjects in BP. The low probability of use of [t] with first person subjects may be consequence of the categorical use of [ŋ] and [m] in this context. But, the plural subjects in HB do not demonstrate preference for [t].

The effects of the linguistic constraint "hypothetical/certain distinction" on [t] and [ŋ + m] is quite similar in both BP and HB. The variant [t] is preferred in hypothetical situations, whereas [ŋ] and [m] are more favoured in certain situations. Nevertheless, the distribution of [b] in hypothetical and certain situations in BP and HB is not same. The effect of "negation" on the irrealis variants is identical in both BP and HB.

The results of quantitative analysis reveals that "patterns of language use" is the strongest constraint accountable for conditioning the variability in the tense, aspect and mood marking in BP. This constraint pervades through the tense, aspect and mood categories. The implication of this finding is that TAM forms in BP attempts to draw a separation of the Bishnupriya (L1) code from the Bengali (L2) and Bishnupriya-Bengali code-switched code. Bishnupriyas associate some of the TAM variant (s) with Bishnupriya (L1) code and some other variants with Bengali (L2) or Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. Nonetheless, these forms overlap in all the three codes.

BP and HB share many of the TAM forms but their distributions in these two languages are not same. The effects of the constraints on the TAM forms in BP and HB are not synonymous. However, there are a few constraints on the TAM markers which are common to both BP and HB. The findings of quantitative analysis suggest that BP and HB constitute two independent and yet overlapping and interactive systems.

Considering the fact that “patterns of language use” turned out to be the most significant linguistic constraint on the TAM forms in BP, in Chapter IV cross-tabulation of the TAM forms by patterns of language use and other linguistic and social constraints is done to assess the relationship of the patterns of language use with the other constraints, both linguistic and social.

The findings of cross-tabulation suggest that in the past tense category, [l] is utilized more across the majority of the constraints in Bishnupriya (L1) data. But the Bengali (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data demonstrate higher use of [s] with most of the constraints. The L2 and code-switched data reflect a turn towards the HB norm. In other words, the Bishnupriyas modify their speech according to the HB pattern in both Bengali (L2) and code-switched data. However, in L2, they succeed to some extent only. The code-switched data demonstrates a complete shift towards the HB norm. The Bishnupriyas even override the Bengalis in the use of [s], which is the preferred HB variant, when they switch from BP to HB.

In the irrealis category, with first person subject, [t] is preferred in all the three codes: L1, L2 and code-switches. However, the frequency of [t] decreases in L2 and code-switched data, indicating a move towards HB, which shows higher use of [m]. The second person and third person subject contexts demonstrate a clear demarcation of Bishnupriya (L1) and the Bengali (L2) or the code-switched data. The L1 data is almost categorically marked by [t], but the L2 and code-switched data prefer [b] to [t], which is the HB pattern.

The findings of cross-tabulations elucidate the relationship and nature of interaction between BP and HB. Despite the fact that BP and HB share many TAM forms, the linguistic patterning of TAM categories in L1, L2 and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches demonstrate the distance between Bishnupriya and HB. The pattern of TAM marking in L1 is conspicuously different from L2 and code-switches. The L2 and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches show a turn towards the HB pattern. Nevertheless, there are differences between L2 and code-switches. The L2 data in general display a

partial shift towards HB, whereas the Bishnupriya to Bengali switches demonstrate a complete merge with the HB pattern. The three linguistic codes, L1, L2 and code-switches form a continuum characterizing the linguistic competence of the bilingual Bishnupriyas. On one end lies the Bishnupriya (L1) code, and on the other end is the Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches, which shows complete convergence with HB. The Bengali (L2) code in between, though is closer to HB, shows interaction with Bishnupriya (L1) code.

Social factors were not significant for conditioning variability in the TAM marking. However, the findings of cross-tabulations reveal a few points relating to the social dimension of variability in TAM forms in BP. The younger speakers and women though follow the trend of the community show a slight inclination towards the HB norms. Perhaps higher education restricts Bishnupriya to Bengali alternations as instances of code-switches did not emerge in the speech of post-graduates.

Chapter V summarizes the findings of the dissertation.

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## Chapter - V

## Summary and Conclusion

**5.0** In this dissertation, I have made an attempt to study the variation in the tense, aspect and mood marking in Bishnupriya (BP) from a bilingual perspective. The study is based on a Bishnupriya community in Hailakandi (Assam), where the Bishnupriyas co-exist with the Bengalis. Bengali is the dominant language of the district, and therefore occupies an important position in the verbal repertoire of the Bishnupriyas in Hailakandi. The main objective of this study is to understand how the grammar(s) are orchestrated in the mind of speakers in a bilingual community. I have tried to address whether the bilinguals have separate grammars for separate languages or one unified grammar for different codes. In this study, I have attempted to show whether (i) Bishnupriya and Bengali operate as one grammar or (ii) Bishnupriya and Bengali function as two independent grammars or (iii) Bishnupriya and Bengali work as interactive grammars, in the mind of the Bishnupriyas. The findings of this study indicate that though Bishnupriya and Bengali seem to operate largely as two independent grammars, the two also interact and overlap to a considerable extent.

**5.1** Chapter I provides an introduction of the dissertation. In this chapter I have given an account of the available literature on bilingualism. I have discussed the thrust areas of different phases in the study on bilingualism. The earliest literature on bilingualism focuses on the description of bilingualism and measurement of bilingualism. Then the focus shifted to the outcomes of bilingualism. Bilingualism can result in multiple outcomes such as, borrowing (Haugen 1950, 1969, Poplack et al. 1988), code-switching (Blom and Gumperz 1972, Poplack 1980, 1985, Myers-Scotton 1993, Myusken 2000), convergence (Emeneau 1956, Masica 1976), language shift (Gal 1979) and even genesis of a new language (Muhlhausler 1974, 1980, Bickerton 1984, Sankoff 1980, 1991, Satyanath 1991). The outcomes of bilingualism have been studied from different perspectives. I have discussed the focus of many such studies. I have dealt with the

research on child bilingualism as well. The literature on child bilingualism deals with primarily bilingual acquisition of languages. The discourse on child bilingualism mainly engages with the nature of relationship between the child's two languages (Leopold 1970, De Houwer 1990, Dopke 2000a, b). The debate on critical period hypothesis also assumes significance in the study of child bilingualism.

Apart from the discourse on bilingualism, I have given a summary of all the existing research on Bishnupriya. In Chapter I, I have also presented information on the Bishnupriya community and the nature of Bishnupriya-Bengali bilingualism in Hailakandi.

In addition, I have discussed the methods and approaches adopted for data collection in this study. This study was conducted using the framework of variation and change, following the methods introduced by Labov (1972, 1984). The data was gathered through two techniques: sociolinguistic interviews and participation observation. The data collected for this study comprises of three kinds of codes of the Bishnupriyas such as, (i) Bishnupriya monolingual (L1), (ii) Bengali monolingual (L2) and (iii) Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. I have also collected local Bengali (HB) data from the Bengalis in order to assess the relation and interaction between Bishnupriya (BP) and Bengali (HB).

**5.2** In chapter II, I have attempted to develop an account of the grammar and semantics of tense, aspect and mood categories, and forms that express these categories in Bishnupriya (BP) and local Bengali (HB) spoken in Hailakandi. As Bishnupriya is an outcome of contact between Eastern Indo-Aryan (primarily Bengali) and Tibeto-Burman languages (essentially Meitei), I have given a brief sketch of the tense, aspect and mood categories and forms in these relevant languages to understand the TAM system of BP. Tibeto-Burman languages make two way categorization: future versus non-future. The non-future category includes the past and the present. Various affixes are used to denote the aspectual and temporal distinctions. The Eastern Bengali varieties show tripartite classification: past, present and future.

The list of the TAM categories and the forms that denote these categories in BP and HB is given in table 5.1.[1] The tense category in BP is represented by the past tense. The past tense in both BP and HB is indicated by *l* and *s*. The forms *l* and *s* locate situations in the past without specifying the remoteness distinctions.

| **TAM Categories** | **BP TAM Forms** | **HB TAM Forms** |
|---|---|---|
| ***Tense*** | | |
| *Past Tense* | *l ~ s* | *l ~ s* |
| ***Aspect*** | | |
| *Present Progressive* | *r ~ s ~ te-s* | *r* |
| *Past Progressive* | *r* | *aat-aas-l* |
| *Future Progressive* | - | *aat-thaak-b/m* |
| *Present Habitual* | *r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s* | *Ø* |
| *Past Habitual* | *l ~ r ~ t ~ s* | *t* |
| *Past Perfect* | *sl* | *sl* |
| ***Mood (Irrealis)*** | | |
| *Future* | *t ~ ŋ ~ b ~ m* | *t ~ b ~ m* |
| *Conditional* | *t* | *t ~ b ~ m* |
| *Counterfactual* | *t ~ l-s* | *l ~ paar-t* |

*Table 5.1 TAM categories and their forms in BP and HB*

The aspect category in BP is characterized by imperfective. The habitual category in BP shows four-way marking. The habitual situations are indicated by *r*, *Ø*, *l* and *s*. In HB, habitual meaning is expressed by *Ø* only. The past habitual situations in BP are denoted by *l, r, t,* and *s,* whereas in HB *t* alone is used. The present progressive category is specified by *r, s* and *te-s* in BP. The form *r* also covers past progressive situations.

There were no instances of future progressive situations in BP data. Unlike BP, HB has separate forms for indicating present progressive, past progressive and future progressive situations. However, the present progressive is expressed by *r* in HB as well. The forms *r* and *s* combine habitual and progressive in BP. This feature can be attributed to various factors. It may be due to the influence of some Tibeo-Burman languages, where the distinction between progressive and habitual is blurred (Grierson 1903). Many contact languages (creoles) also display this feature (Winford 2000b). There are also many languages in the world, which use same form to connote both habitual and progressive meanings (See Bybee et al. 1994).

The mood category is represented by the irrealis. The irrealis category subsumes future situations, conditionals, counterfactuals and imperatives. The future situations (hypothetical and certain) are encoded by *t*, *ŋ*, *m* and *b*. The future marking in BP resembles HB. However, counterfactuals and conditionals demonstrate some digression between BP and HB. The imperatives in both the languages are not marked for TAM categories.

BP shows proximity with HB with respect to tense (past) and irrealis system. However, in the aspectual marking, BP shows deviation from HB. BP displays variability in marking of aspectual categories, which HB lacks. The delineation of the tense, aspect and mood categories and forms suggests that BP has one tense, represented by past, one aspect, that is imperfective and one mood, denoted by irrealis category. The description of the TAM categories and forms suggests that there is variability in TAM marking in BP. Multiple forms perform the same function or a single affix performs multiple functions. Since the forms are multifunctional, semantics was used as the guiding criteria for identifying the TAM categories that the forms assign.

**5.3** In Chapter III, I have provided a quantitative analysis of variable expression of tense, aspect and mood categories in BP. I have analyzed the function and significance of the various linguistic constraints in affecting the choice and distribution of TAM forms in

BP. As BP shares many of the TAM forms with HB, the linguistic constraints in BP are discussed along with HB, to evaluate the relationship between the two systems.

The past tense forms [l ~ s] were coded for seven linguistic constraints such as:

(i) Patterns of language use
(ii) Grammatical person of the subject
(iii) Degree of remoteness
(iv) Grammatical clauses
(v) Negation
(vi) Stativity
(vii) Lexical category.

All the seven constraints turned out to be significant for BP. However, in HB only two (grammatical person of the subject and stativity) out of the six constraints were found to be significant.[2]

The linguistic constraint "patterns of language use" which encompasses the total linguistic repertoire (L1, L2 and code-switches) of the Bishnupriyas turned out to be the strongest constraint on the past tense forms in BP. Quantitative analysis indicates that [l] is favoured more in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data, whereas [s] is preferred in Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data of the Bishnupriyas. This constraint was not applicable for the past tense forms in HB. The next important constraint is "grammatical clauses". In BP, conditional and adverbial clauses choose [l] over [s]. On the other hand, the relative and interrogative clauses display more use of [s]. This constraint is not significant for the past tense markers in HB. However, the conditional clauses in HB also demonstrate preference for [l].

The third significant constraint "grammatical person of the subject" is shared between BP and HB. Yet the effects of the constraints are not synonymous in both the languages.

Negative sentences display a strong preference for [s], but the affirmative sentences slightly favour [l]. This linguistic pattern is visible in HB as well. However, the probability of use of [s] in negative sentences in BP is higher than HB.

A connection between stativity and the choice of past form exists both in BP and in HB. The stative verbs demonstrate very high tendency to use [s] over [l]. In contrast, the non-stative verbs show slightly more use of [l].

The past tense forms [l] and [s] distinguish the remote past from the recent past and immediate past contexts to some degree in BP. [l] is favoured more in remote past situations, whereas [s] is selected more in immediate past and recent past contexts. The past forms in HB do not categorize this distinction.

Quantitative analysis demonstrated that "patterns of language use" is the most salient constraint on the BP past tense forms. The distribution of the past tense forms [l] and [s] in BP and HB demonstrates a reverse trend. The linguistic constraints operating on the past tense forms in these two systems are not same. Nevertheless, there are a few constraints such as, stativity and negation that condition the past tense forms in BP and HB in a similar pattern.

**5.3.1** In the habitual category, variability between the four markers [r ~ Ø ~ l ~ s] is in the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data alone. Despite the presence of four forms, [r] indicates a majority of the habitual situations. The other three forms [Ø ~ l ~ s] designate a small percentage the habitual situations. Two linguistic constraints, such as, (i) patterns of language use and (ii) generic and non-generic distinction condition the variability in the habitual category. The habitual forms [l] and [s] occur in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech only, but [r] and [Ø] appear in all the three codes, L1, L2 and code-switches. Quantitative analysis demonstrates that [r] is favoured more in the L1 data. The other two kinds of data, L2 and code-switches show near categorical use of [Ø], which is the HB form. The habitual markers trigger a split between the generic and non-generic sentences.

The variant [l] occurs only in generic sentences, but the variants [r] and [s] occur more in non-generic sentences.

The "patterns of language use" is the only constraint that causes variability in the past habitual and present progressive category. The variability between past habitual markers [r ~ l ~ t ~ s] is in the Bishnupriya monolingual data alone. The Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data show use of the HB form [t] alone, thereby suggesting a complete shift to HB. Although three variants [r ~ s ~ te-s] surface in the present progressive category, [r] marks a majority of the situations connoting present progressive meaning. However, a few instances of [s] appear in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data, and [te-s] in L2 and code-switched data. Apart from the patterns of language use, connection between any other linguistic factor and past habitual or present progressive forms could not be established.

**5.3.2** In the irrealis category, future events and conditionals were considered in the multivariate analysis. The instances of counterfactuals were very few and so it was not included. BP and HB have the same irrealis markers. There are four linguistic constraints, which condition the frequency and choice of irrealis variants in BP. These constraints are (i) patterns of language use, (ii) grammatical person of the subject, (iii) hypothetical/certain distinction and (iv) negation. The patterns of language use turned out to be a powerful constraint on irrealis variants as well. The pattern of irrealis marking demonstrates an attempt to separate the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech from the Bengali monolingual (L2) and bilingual discourses, that is, code-switches. The form [t] is selected more in L1, whereas [b] is overwhelmingly used in Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. Similarly [ŋ] and [m] make a clear distinction between the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code and the Bengal monolingual (L2) or the code-switched speech. The variant [ŋ] is used only in L1, whereas [m] appears in L2 and bilingual alternations. The Bishnupriyas identify [b] with HB, despite the fact that the overall pattern of irrealis marking in HB data do not show any preference for [b]. A relation between irrealis markers [t ~ b ~ ŋ ~ m] and person marking is found in both BP and HB. The variant [t] occurs with every grammatical person (first, second and third)

and [b] appears with second and third person subjects. The forms [ŋ] and [m] occur with first person subject only. The variant [m] is realized as [ŋ] in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) speech. Apart from first person singular subjects, all the other subjects, especially the plural ones show preference for [t]. The low probability of use of [t] in first person subject contexts may be because of the categorical use of [ŋ] and [m] in this context. Unlike BP, the plural subjects in HB do not demonstrate preference for [t]. In contrast, in HB, first person plural subjects select [m] more and third person plural subject use [b] more.

BP and HB demonstrate a similar distribution of [t] and [n/m] in the hypothetical and certain or definite situations. The hypothetical situations favour [t] more, but the certain situations select [ŋ/m] more. However, BP and HB vary with regard to the distribution of [b]. The effect of negation on the irrealis variants is same in both BP and HB.

Quantitative analysis demonstrates that "patterns of language use" is the strongest constraint responsible for conditioning variability in the tense, aspect and mood marking in BP. This constraint operates across the tense, aspect and mood categories. In fact, in the aspect category (except habitual), it is the only constraint that triggers variability in marking. The effect of this constraint underscores the fact that the tense, aspect and mood forms in BP make an attempt to differentiate the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code from the Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya-Bengali code-switched speech. Bishnupriyas identify some of the TAM variant (s) with Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code and some with Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. However, these forms overlap in all the three codes.

Even though BP and HB share many of the TAM forms, their distribution in these two languages are not same. The nature and effects of the constraints on the TAM forms in BP and HB are not identical either. Nonetheless, there are a few constraints, which are common to both BP and HB. The findings of quantitative analysis suggest that BP and HB constitute overlapping and yet two independent systems.

**5.4** In Chapter IV, I have cross-tabulated the TAM variants by patterns of language use and other linguistic and social constraints to explore the relationship of the patterns of language use with other constraints, linguistic as well as social.

The overall findings of cross-tabulation suggest that in the past tense category, [l] is used more with most of the constraints in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) data. The Bengali monolingual (L2) and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switched data show greater use of [s] and reduction in the use of [l], indicating a shift towards the HB pattern. Although Bishnupriyas modify their speech according to the HB pattern in both Bengali monolingual (L2) and code-switched discourses, they succeed in L2 to some extent only. The code-switched data reveals a complete shift towards the HB norm. The Bishnupriyas even exceed the Bengalis in the use of [s] when they alternate between BP and HB. The effects of different constraints are not consistent across the three codes. For instance, in the factor group "grammatical person of the subject" [l] is preferred with every grammatical person in L1. The frequency of [l] however slightly declines in the slot for third person singular subjects. As a result, there is slight increase in the frequency of [s] in this code (L1). This small decrease in the use of [l] and slight increase in the frequency of [s] in third person singular subject contexts is in agreement with the results of multivariate analysis, to some extent. L2 data does not follow this constraint. However, in code-switches the highest use of [s] is recorded with third person singular subjects.

The cross-tabulations of irrealis variants show that with first person subject, [t] is preferred across the three codes that is, L1, L2 and code-switches. However, the frequency of [t] decreases in L2 and code-switched data, suggesting a move towards HB, which shows higher use of [m]. The second person and third person subject contexts demonstrate a demarcation of Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) and the Bengali monolingual (L2) or bilingual discourses. The L1 data shows almost categorical marking by [t], whereas the L2 and code-switched data show preference for [b], which is the HB pattern.[3] The use of [b] in L2 and code-switched data of the Bishnupriyas overshoots the frequency of [b] in HB.

The pattern of marking of the tense, aspect and mood categories across the different patterns of language use (L1, L2 and C-S) throws light on the relationship and nature of interaction between BP and HB. Studies on child bilingualism have dealt with the issue of relationship between the different languages with regard to bilingual acquisition (Dopke 2000b). Recent studies provide evidence for language separation as well as cross-linguistic influences in bilingual children (See Dopke 2000b: 100). Even though BP and HB have many common TAM markers, cross-tabulation results demonstrate the distance between BP and HB as reflected in the linguistic patterning of TAM categories. The pattern of TAM marking in Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code reflects a conspicuous difference from Bengali monolingual (L2) code and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. The Bengali monolingual (L2) code and Bishnupriya to Bengali alternations show a shift towards the HB pattern. The Bengali monolingual (L2) data displays an incomplete shift towards the HB trend. The L2 data though shows a turn towards the direction of HB, the effects of linguistic constraints operating in BP are echoed in L2 speech to some extent. The Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches demonstrate a complete shift towards the HB pattern. The three linguistic codes of Bishnupriyas, that is, L1, L2 and code-switches form a continuum representing the linguistic competence of the bilingual Bishnupriyas. On one end, lies the Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code, and on the other extreme is the Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches, which shows complete convergence with HB. The Bengali monolingual (L2) code in between is closer to HB, but shows interaction with Bishnupriya monolingual (L1) code.

**5.5** The quantitative analysis elucidates the nature and extent of variability both within and across the tense, aspect and mood categories in BP. It also provides an account of the linguistic factors that condition the variability in the tense, aspect and mood categories in BP. The quantitative analysis of the tense, aspect and mood forms in BP and HB helped us to understand the nature of interaction between the two language systems. The use of a bilingual framework in this study allowed us to understand the arrangement of grammars of the various codes that constitutes the linguistic competence of the bilinguals. For the Bishnupriyas, Bishnupriya and HB represent two separate linguistic systems, which

correspond with each other. Within the bilingual discourse too, Bishnupriyas make a distinction between the L2 code and Bishnupriya to Bengali code-switches. The difference in linguistic patterning of L2 and codes-switches may be due to two reasons. Bishnupriyas want to maintain some gap between their Bengali and the Bengali of the local Bengalis, while interacting in L2. In code-switches, they want to disambiguate the Bishnupriya segment from the HB segment. Therefore, they replicate the HB pattern or even exceed the HB trend while code-switching. Studies on code-switching have talked about ambiguous alternations, where it is difficult to separate the different codes. BP exploits different TAM markers to disambiguate such alternations.

Social factors were not significant for conditioning variability in the TAM marking. Nevertheless, a few points relating to the social dimension of variability in TAM forms in BP emerge from cross-tabulations. The younger speakers and women though follow the trend of the community show a slight inclination towards the HB norms. Perhaps higher education restrains Bishnupriya to Bengali alternations. No instances of code-switches emerged in the speech of post-graduates. Moreover, women indulge in code-switches more than men. The women in Bishnupriya community have less education in comparison to men.

Finally, as this is the first study of Bishnupriya speech community in a bilingual framework, it has its share of shortcomings as well. One of the shortcomings stems from the difficulties in eliciting bilingual data itself. As a result, bilingual data is not uniformly distributed across speakers. Poplack et al. (1988: 49) point out the problems in elicitation of bilingual data and report that only a small fraction of bilingual data emerges even in massive corpus of speech data from a well representative sample. Perhaps a perception test in future may help in determining the social meanings attached to the three codes of the Bishnupriyas.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that the findings presented in this dissertation would contribute to the understanding of bilingualism in complex speech communities.

## Notes

[1] This table is reproduced from Chapter II (Table 2.6).

[2] In HB, there were six constraints as "patterns of language use" was not applicable.

[3] The overall distribution of the irrealis variants in HB does not show preference for [b] (See table 3.24 in Chapter III). However, the distribution of irrealis variants with the different linguistic factors demonstrates higher use of [b] in HB (See Chapter IV).

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| Ph.D. | **University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA** | **1991** |
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## Career Profile

**1. Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Delhi, Delhi (2000-present)**
**2. Reader, Department of Linguistics, Assam University, Silchar, Assam (1995- 2000)**

## Administrative Assignments

**NAAC Coordinator for Department of Linguistics**

## Areas of Interest / Specialization

Shobha Satyanath specializes in the related multidisciplinary areas of Language Variation and Change, Socio Phonetics, Dialect Geography, Language contact, Pidgins and Creoles, Multilingualism, Socio-Historical, and quantitative linguistics, which translates into both her teaching and research. Her research is majorly concentrated in Eastern and North Eastern India and on urban towns and cities across the country.

## Subjects Taught

1. Introduction to Linguistics
2. Phonetics
3. Aspects of Linguistic Behaviour
4. Topics in Sociolinguistics
5. Multilingualism

6. Seminar on City and Language
7. Language contact, mixed languages
8. Historical Linguistics
9. Research Methodology,
10. Data and Methodology,
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## Research Guidance

*List against each head (If applicable)*

***Supervision of Doctoral Thesis***

1. Laskar, Nazrin B. (2011). Contact: A study of variation and change in a bilingual context: The case of Bishnupriya. (awarded)
2. Dey, Kakoli (2010). A Sociolinguistic study: Silchar Bengali. (awarded)
3. Sharma, Richa (2017). A sociophonetic study of variation in vowels among Hindi / Punjabi-English bilinguals in Delhi (submitted).
4. Bhattacharya, Pratibha (2017). Variation and change: A case study of Calcutta Bengali (Submitted)
5. ~~Saxena, Raj Tilak. A Sociolinguistic Study of Bhopal: Hindi and its Constituent Varieties~~.
6. Kelhouvinuo Suokhrie. *Clanlectal contact and its impact on language change in Kohima village*

***Supervision of awarded M.Phil dissertations***

1. Viya Terhiija. A study of southern Angami dialects in space. (submitted)
2. Catherine Michael. Language choice in a multilingual context: implications for phonology.
3. Gayatri Das. Language and ethnicity: A case study of Missing in Assam with particular reference to Dhemaji.
4. KelhuoVinuo Suokhrie. Internal variation in Angami: A case study of Kohima village.
5. Neethu Sunny. A Sociolinguistic study of Malayalam in Cherukunnam.
6. Richa, Sharma. Phonetic Realizations of vowels in Indian English.
7. Bhattacharya, Pratibha .Voicing patterns in Delhi English.
8. Das, Bishakha. The lesser-known languages of Lohit district: A socio-historical investigation. Department of Linguistics, University of Delhi.
9. Laskar, Nazrin B. Contact between Tibeto-Burman and Indic: The case of Bishnupriya.

***Publications Profile***

- Satyanath, Shobha (in press) Editorial. *Asia-Pacific Language Variation*, 3.1, pp.1-4.
- Satyanath, Shobha (In press). Kohima: Language variation and change in a small but diverse city in India. In Dick Smakman and Patrick (eds.) Urban Sociolinguistics: The city as a linguistic process and experience. Heinrich (eds.). *Globalizing Sociolinguistics*, 95- 112. London and New York: Routledge.
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- Satyanath, Shobha (2016) Editorial. *Asia-Pacific Language Variation*, 2.2, pp.121-123
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- Satyanath, Shobha and Sharma Richa. (2016). The growth of English in Delhi: New perspectives in a multilingual setting. In Singh, Jaspal, Argyro Kantara and Dorottya Cserző (eds.) *Downscaling Culture: Revisiting Intercultural Communication*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars.
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- Satyanath, Shobha. 2004-5. Postcolonial creole(s), decreolization, and Guyanese English. Sargasso (I): [Creolistics and Caribbean Languages], 113-140.
- Satyanath, Shobha. 2003. On the maintenance of transplanted Indian languages overseas. In Rekha Sharma, and E. Annamalai (eds.). Indian diaspora: In search of identity, 85-104. Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages.
- Satyanath, Shobha. 2003. Review of Mukherjee, Aditi and Vasanta Duggirala (eds). Practice and research in literacy. Contributions to Indian Sociology 37(3), 545-547.
- Satyanath, Shobha. 2003. A bibliography on Indians overseas. In Rekha Sharma, and E. Annamalai (eds.). Indian diaspora: In search of identity, 338-347. Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages.
- Satyanath, Shobha. 2001. Language change and transmission of knowledge across generation. Indian Linguistics (62): 73-88.
- Satyanath, Shobha. 2001. Reviews of Rajendra Singh (ed.). Grammar, language and society. And Lachman M. Khubchnadani. Revisualizing boundaries, A plurilingual ethos. Contributions to Indian Sociology 35(3): 438-440.
- Satyanath, Shobha. 2000. Adequacy of creole languages: accounting for variation in the tense-aspect categories in Guyanese English. Vartavaha (5):1-44. Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages.
- Satyanath, Shobha. 1994. Review of Rajend Mesthrie. A Sociolinguistic history of Bhojpuri-Hindi in South Africa. Language in Society 23(4):591-595.
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- Satyanath, Shobha. 1990. The use of pronouns and its implications for the implicational modal of decreolization in Guyanese. The Penn Review of Linguistics (14): 129-142. Department of Linguistics: University of Pennsylvania.
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***Monographs***

- Satyanath, Shobha (1997). Language on Assam Tea Plantations. UGC Minor Research Project. Assam University, Silchar.
- Satyanath, Shobha (1998). Adequacy of Creole Languages: Accounting for variation in the tense-aspect categories in Guyanese English. Indian Council for Social Science and Research. Kannada University, Hampi, Karnataka.

***Conference Organization/ Presentations***

*List against each head (If applicable)*

***Organization of a Workshop***

- CAS Intensive workshop on Acoustic Phonetics (March 2-4, 2017) Department of Linguistics, University of Delhi.

***Organization of a Conference***

- New ways of analyzing language variation and change. (NWAV ASIA-PACIFIC I) University Delhi, (February 23-36, 2011).
- Social lives of language, A Cardiff – Delhi University Symposium, University of Delhi (August 16, 2013).
- Panel on *Landscaping languages of North East India*. NEILS. Latrobe University and Guwahati University, Assam (January Jan 31-Feb 2, 2014).
- Panel on *Study of speech communities in India*. University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad (February 6-8, 2014).
- Downscaling Culture: revisiting intercultural communication. In collaboration with Cardiff University, Wales, UK (September 18-19, 2014).

Multiple Voices. Colloquium in appreciation of Ramakant Agnihotri (December 2010).

***Participation as Paper/Poster Presenter***

**International Conferences**

2016

- Satyanath, Shobha (2016). Mapping linguistic diversity in colonial Bengal. Language colonization and Endangerment: Long-tern effects, echoes and reactions. The 20th FEL Conference. (Dec 9-12, 2016),
- Hybridity, multilingualism, identity and change in Nagaland. Language power and Identity in Asia: Creating and Crossing Language boundaries. IIAS Leiden, Netherlands (March 14-16, 2016).
- Motivation for language change in language contact. NWAV-AP 4. National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan (April 20-22, 2016).

**2014**

- Problematizing style shift in Indian contexts. Keynote Address, Downscaling Culture: revisiting intercultural communication. Cardiff University, Wales, UK.
- (September 18-19, 2014)
- Studying a restructured variety in a multilingual context. NWAV-AP 3. University of Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand (May 1-3, 2014).
- Sociolinguistic research: The Indian experience. SALA. University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad (February 6-8, 2014).
- Retroflex, palatals and conjunct consonants. NEILS. Latrobe University and Guwahati University, Assam (January 31-Feb 2, 2014).

**2012**

- The Indian experience with English-from classroom to the community, from ESL/EFL to ENL. Tenth TEFL. TEFl Asia (with Richa Sharma), Delhi, India. (October 4-6, 2012).
- Diffusion of linguistic changes in nineteenthcentury Bengal. NWAV ASIA-PACIFIC II, NINJAL, Tokyo, Japan (August 1-4, 2012).

2011

- Spatiality of alveolars and palatals across Eastern India. NWAV ASIA-PACIFIC I, University of Delhi, Delhi (February 23-36, 2011).
- Is a multilingual speech community possible? Panel discussion on Asia Pacific speech communities: Challenges. NWAV ASIA-PACIFIC I, University of Delhi, Delhi (February 23-26, 2011).

**2010**

- Landscaping Bengali through time and space. International Congress of Bengal Studies. University of Delhi, Delhi (February 25-28, 2010).

**2008**

- Bishnupriya and not Manipuri? Surviving identity amid conflict in North East Part of India. NWAV, Houston, Texas, U.S.A. (November. 2008) [jointly with Nazrin Laskar].

- Outcomes of contact: variability in NP structure of Bishnupriya. International meeting of the North East Indian Linguistic Society (NEILS). Latrobe University and Guwahati University, Assam (January 20-22, 2008) [jointly with Nazrin Laskar].

- Problematizing the discourse of endangered languages. International Seminar on Endangered and indigenous languages. CALTS, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad (March 1-3, 2008).

**2007**

- Journey of khan from Assamese to Nagamese. International meeting of the North East Indian Linguistic Society (NEILS). Latrobe University and Guwahati University, Assam (February 7-9, 2007 ) [jointly with Kakoli Dey].

- Revisiting the story of Khan in Nagamese. 13th International Himalayan Language Symposium. Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla (October 22-24, 2007) [jointly with Kakoli Dey].

2006

- Creoles under scanner: natural change and unnatural languages? International Workshop on Simplicity and Complexity in Creole languages. University of Siegen, Siegen, Germany (April 6-8, 2006).

- Lexicon in a contact language: Bishnupriya. International meeting of the North East Indian Linguistic Society. La Trobe University, Australia and Gauhati University, Gauhati (February 6-7, 2006). [jointly with Nazrin Laskar].

**2003**

- Morphology within and across generations of speakers: the case of Guyanese Creole English. International Workshop on the Phonology and Morphology of Creole Languages. University of Siegen, Germany (October 8-10, 2003).

- Variability in the use and distribution of classifiers in Bishnupriya- a contact language (jointly with Nazrin Laskar). New Ways of Analysing Variation (NWAV 32). University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, U.S.A (October 9-12, 2003).

- Globalization, language diversity and new world Englishes. International Conference on Issues in Applied Linguistics. Department of Linguistics, University of Delhi, Delhi (December 12-14, 2003).

**1998-1999**

- Is Nagamese a pidgin, creole or a restructured variety? International Conference on South Asian Languages. Punjab University, Patiala (January 9-11, 1999).
- Variation in agreement- Is there number concord in Guyanese English creole? International Seminar on Agreement. Department of Linguistics, University of Delhi, Delhi (January 9-11, 1998).

**1990-1994**

- Maintenance of transplanted Indian languages overseas: a comparative perspective. International Conference on the maintenance of Indian languages and cultures overseas. CIIL, Mysore (January 5-9, 1994).
- The issue of rule ordering in variable phonology: (daz) in Guyanese. The annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America and the Society of Pidgin and Creole Linguistics. University of California, L.A, U.S.A ( January 7-11, 1993).
- On the tense marking of (daz) in Guyanese English Creole. Meeting of the Society for Pidgins and Creole Linguistics in conjunction with the Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America. Chicago, U.S.A. ( January 3-6, 1991).

- The use of pronouns and its implications for the implicational modal of decreolization in Guyanese. The fourteenth Annual Penn Linguistics Colloquium. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (February 9-10, 1990).

**1989-1982**

- Perceptual significance of acoustic properties: voiceless nasals in Burmese. International Conference on linguistic approaches to phonetics. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (May 1-3, 1989).
- Indian substratum in Guyanese Creole? South Asian Languages Analysis Round Table IX. Cornell/ Syracuse University, Ithaca/ Syracuse (June 5-7, 1987).
- Testing language proficiency in India: some problematic issues. VIII Delaware Symposium on language studies. University of Delaware, Newark (October 23-25, 1986).
- Politeness Phenomenon in Hindi. South Asian Languages Analysis Round Table III. CIIl, Mysore (May, 1982).

**National Seminars/ Conferences/Talks**

- Fundamentals of Sociolinguistics. Key note Lecture. Short term course on Sociolinguistics. IIT Roorkee, June 9, 2014.
- Issues in language contact. Short term course on Sociolinguistics.IIT Roorkee, June 9, 2014.
- Language variation and gender. Keynote Address. National Seminar on Gender and Language, In commemoration of Prof. K. Nagamma Reddy. University of Kerala, Trivendrum (March 12-14, 2014).
- Let's talk. What is your Bhasha? The jumpstart festival. India International Centre (August 30, 2013).
- Proposal and Project Writing. Centre for professional development in higher education University of Delhi (7 Mar-9 March 2013).
- Boundaries of Knowledge: Sociolinguistics and Social sciences. Boundaries of knowledge: Methods and strategies. Department of Linguistics, University of Delhi, Delhi (March 23, 2013).
- Language and identity. Gijubhai Memorial Lecture. Jesus and Mary College (As part of annual event, 'AAGAAZ: The Beginning) Delhi (March 22, 2013).
- Nation and Language. Meeting of the Zomi language and Literature Society (ZOLLS). Manipur. Nov 20-22, 2012.
- The state and the speech community: The role of language and linguistic cultures in identity formations. The role of language and culture in nation making. Bombay University (January 27-29, 2011).
- Language Variation and change: Social and temporal lives of language. Department of Sanskrit, University of Delhi, Delhi (31-12-2011).

Research Projects (Major Grants/Research Collaboration)

1. Research collaboration and cooperation with Kanda University of International Studies, Japan. The project seeks to develop modules in eight different varieties of English including Indian English [2015-2016].

2. International Collaboration with Cardiff University, Wales, UK. (ICSSR-ESRC-UKIERI Ph.D. Partnering

Initiative) [2013-2016] on post-colonial English (Indian English).

## Awards and Distinctions

Govt. of India National Scholarship for study abroad

## Association With Professional Bodies

**1. Editor**, *Asia-Pacific Language Variation*. John Benjamins.
2. Member, Editorial Board, John Benjamins (Creole Library Series). 2006-present.
3. Member, Editorial Advisory Board. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole languages*. John Benjamins (until 2014).
4. Member of the International Steering Committee: NWAV-AP.

## Other Activities

Building Speech corpora of Indian Languages